BIG BUSINESS LOBBIES INVADE CONGRESS *by Adam Lapin*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

January 7, 1941

GUNS BEHIND THE "PEACE" TALK

"What lies behind the exchange of compliments among Messrs. White, Wood and Lindbergh, and the suggestions for a negotiated peace by Senators Wheeler, Vandenberg and Tydings?"

FDR'S FIREBRAND CHAT *An Editorial*

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Between Ourselves

EILEEN MCKENNEY was one of that corps of willing and devoted workers whose efforts have sustained NM through many a difficult day. For a time she was an editorial assistant in this office. Those of us who knew her best will never forget her cheerful and energetic cooperation. She was, for all of us, my sister Eileen—not as a character in a story, but as a warm, bright, hopeful companion, always able to dispel the blues with a word which made one ashamed of losing, even momentarily, one's sense of humor. None of the easy, timeworn phrases can speak for our grief at her death—only a deep, unutterable, helpless protest from the heart. Eileen hated the maudlin. Her gay blue eyes were fixed on the morrow, not on the regrets of the unalterable day gone by. The image of Eileen and of her young and gifted husband, Nathaniel West, remains with us, an unshatterable part of our common fight.

We are sorry that we didn't read Mother Bloor's delightful autobiography, *We Are Many,* before the close of Ruth McKenney's big cash contest on books that changed my mind. Not that Mother Bloor's book itself changed our ideas so much as it deepened and illuminated them. We always thought Mother Bloor was one of the truly great women of our time, and we're twice as sure now. The point, rather, is that Mother Bloor mentions a whole string of books which changed *her* mind at one time or another. And a fascinating list it is, a sure-fire first prize winner.

Earliest of the books mentioned are novels by Dickens, Scott, and George Eliot. The poetry of Walt Whitman bolstered Mother Bloor's faith in the common man, American democratic traditions, and internationalism. Mother Bloor knew Whitman when she was a child, and she gives a memorable picture of her trips with the Good Gray Poet on the ferry from Camden. As a young girl, Ella Reeve read Robert Ingersoll, Darwin, Spencer, and Renan's *Life of Jesus*—with damaging effects on any lingering notions about the supernatural.

Acquaintance with Russian literature goes away back to the time when Ella read the novel *What Is to Be Done* by the great liberal publicist and critic, Chernyshevsky, (years later Mother Bloor was interested in Lenin's impressions of the book as recorded in Krupskaya's Memories of Lenin). Shakespeare was always a favorite and Ella played a number of famous parts in amateur productions. In 1894-5—and continually thereafter—we find Mother Bloor reading Marx and Engels. In 1895 she wrote a book on science for young people *(Three Little Lovers of Nature),* and later she wrote a book on literature *(Talks About Authors and Their Works).*

Three other writers about whom Mother Bloor has some extremely interesting things to say: William Morris (whose *News from Nowhere* was always a favorite with her), Martin Anderson Nexo, and Gorki. We were particularly impressed with the references to the two great proletarian novels: Gorki's *Mother* and Nexo's *Pelle the Conqueror.* Mother Bloor's talks with the authors of both books, recorded toward the end of her autobiography, form a significant link with her conversations with Whitman, recorded in the early pages.

A great list. We vote ourselves a prize for this discovery.

Despite the rain that evening last November, 900 people crowded into Webster Hall to hear the first "Interpretation, Please?" Judging from the response of the audience and the letters that came in, the evening was a highly successful one. By popular request NM has arranged another "Interpretation, Please?" evening on literature and politics for January 23. William Blake will be exchanging quips with Isidor Schneider, Alvah Bessie, and Albert Maltz. Other participants will be announced in the next issue. Sender Garlin, *Daily Worker* columnist, will act as interlocutor. The place is again Webster Hall, 119 East Eleventh Street, and tickets are 50 cents each.

Alvah Bessie, who reviewed Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* for NM, and is the author of *Men in Battle,* will be one of the six veterans of the Spanish war to take part in a symposium on Hemingway's book on January 11 at 2 PM at the Workers School, 50 East 13th St., New York City. Other speakers are Milton Wolff, major in the Lincoln brigade and national commander of the Lincoln veterans; David McKelvy White, machine-gunner in the Washington battalion and former instructor at Brooklyn College; Irving Goff, lieutenant of guerrilla groups and executive secretary of the Lincoln brigade; John Gates, political commissar of the 15th International Brigade. Walter Garland, first lieutenant of the Washington battalion, will act as chairman. The speakers will answer questions to be followed by discussion from the floor. Admission is 25 cents and part of the proceeds will be donated to the American Rescue Ship Mission.

A reader who signs himself (or is it herself?) "A New Friend" writes us the following note: "I don't know who it is but someone sent me a subscription to *NM* for Christmas. Last week I received the issue containing your story *Design for Empire.* It struck me that if that story with the quotations from Virgil Jordan's speech got into the hands of 500,000 Americans the administration's moves towards direct intervention would be considerably impeded. After reading the liberal weeklies for the last few years your paper comes as an invigorating tonic. More power to you."

Flashbacks

JANUARY 1 is a very special day in Negro history. That day in 1808 the importation of Negro slaves to the United States became illegal. In 1831 on January 1 the first issue of the *Liberator,* Abolitionist paper edited by William Lloyd Garrison, appeared in Boston. And on January 1, 1863, Lincoln made permanent Emancipation Proclamation freeing Negro slaves, which had first been announced September 22, 1862. . . . As the great English People's Convention meets in early January, it is interesting to note that the first English Parliament organized in opposition to the unlimited power of the King met January 3, 1265. . . . And while the English people look with dread at the sky and with anger at the government which continues the present war for empire, another anniversary falls due: on January 7, 1785, the English Channel was crossed for the first time by air. Two men made the peaceful trip in a balloon for the greater glory of science.

Who's Who

ADAM LAPIN is *NM's* Washington correspondent. . . . Simon W. Gerson recently returned from a tour of the Midwest which he reported for *NM.* . . . Ricardo Setaro is an Argentine journalist. . . . Jacques Roumain is an internationally known Haitian writer. . . . Russell R. Stone is an instructor of history in a Midwestern college. . . . Lou Cooper is a young musician and composer. . . . Harold Ward has contributed many articles on science to *NM* and other magazines. . . . Stephen Peabody's reviews have frequently appeared in *NM.* . . . Marian J. Gross is a graduate student specializing in science.

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NEW MASSES

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Guns Behind the "Peace" Talk

Why the Aid to Britain crowd squabbles with the "America First" committee. Tactical differences between the appeasers and the interventionists. An editorial.

PEACE, which for so long was an off-color word, is once again becoming respectable. During the past couple of weeks it has begun to enjoy a certain popularity in the very politest society. Even William Allen White, who for months has been leading the crusade for all aid to the British empire shorter and shorter of war, the other day publicly declared his love of peace. Whereupon Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, our foremost Nazi, and Gen. Robert E. Wood, chairman of the America First Committee, tenderly embraced the sage of Emporia and welcomed him to the high fraternity of peace-lovers. Of course, none of these amorous gentlemen is proposing marriage to the lady, but so loud are they in protesting the depth and fervor of their passion that the real nature of the relationship they are offering may be obscured. It is well to examine this question in some detail. Of peace, as of heaven in the Negro spiritual, it can be said that many of those who are talking about it aren't going there.

What lies behind the exchange of compliments among Messrs. White, Wood, and Lindbergh, and the suggestions for a negotiated peace by Senators Wheeler, Vandenberg, and Tydings?

When France collapsed in June, the American capitalist class and the Roosevelt administration, which, like their counterparts in Britain and France, had completely miscalculated the development of the war, found it necessary to take stock, particularly in view of the approaching elections. Non-interventionist sentiment grew in the ranks of big business; the America First Committee emerged as a counter-weight to the William Allen White Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies; the Scripps-Howard press, which had previously been interventionist, switched sides. Panicky capitalists, politicians, and newspaper commentators believed that Britain was about to fall like an overripe fruit into the Nazi lap. When these fears soon proved groundless, the dominant trend toward greater involvement on the British side reasserted itself and the destroyers-bases deal was consummated in September. In the succeeding months the British, with the help of their American allies, continued to withstand the German attack and forced a postponement of the Nazi plans for the invasion of the financial-industrial center of the empire. And in the eastern Mediterranean British imperialism, by way of Greece, has in recent weeks been able to pass from the defensive to the offensive against the weak Italian end of the Axis. Germany meanwhile, after occupying Rumania, has been blocked from further advance in the Balkans by Soviet diplomatic action and the increased resistance of Bulgaria, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. Thus there has been created a certain temporary equilibrium in the war. Once more the American ruling class is faced with the question: what next? With the new Congress about to meet, the struggle among the various groups and tendencies to determine the answer to this question sharpens.

American imperialism is pursuing in this war virtually the same policy as in the last; it seeks to profit from the conflict, to prolong it in order to strengthen its position at the expense of both Germany and England, and to postpone its own direct military participation until the moment when its entry can decisively affect the outcome. But in this war there is a new factor of towering significance; underneath the open war between the German-Italian and Anglo-American blocs there is the hidden war against the Soviet Union, against the forces of democracy and socialism everywhere. This hidden war broke into the open in the Soviet-Finnish conflict, and it underlies all imperialist aims and strategic considerations. American finance capital seeks through this war to become not only the master of world capitalism, but its savior, the force that will try to settle accounts with socialism. But its problems have been complicated by the fact that Anglo-French imperialism has proved relatively weaker in a military sense and German imperialism relatively stronger than in 1914-18; this has necessitated larger commitments and a more rapid rate of involvement than the American ruling class had anticipated.

Those secondary capitalist groups, which have all along favored a more cautious policy and a greater readiness to come to terms with German imperialism, are now taking advantage of the temporary equilibrium created in the European war and the political interlude in our own country to press for their proposals. Hence the increased activity of the America First Committee and the No Foreign War Committee, and the appeals for a negotiated peace made by various senators. On the other hand, the dominant interventionist forces, faced with continued popular opposition to war and the prospect of a long, exhausting struggle in Europe, whose social consequences no one can foresee, are also taking time out to reappraise the situation. They must choose between a negotiated peace, which will leave Germany master of central and western Europe, and a prolonged war which may prove fatal to capitalism—a dilemma which has already produced sharp divergences of opinion within the interventionist camp, as is indicated in the controversy over William Allen White's recent statement in which he sought to compete in "peace" demagogy, with the non-interventionist appeasers.

In addition to developments in the European war and the stubborn devotion of the American people to peace, two other problems are giving our big business interventionists pause: the lagging of the arms program, and the sharpened conflict with Japan. All sections of big business are agreed on attempting to solve the first of these problems at the expense of labor and the people as a whole; the Roosevelt administration, while it must deal with the opposition of labor, particularly the CIO, is disposed to meet the tycoons of finance and industry more than half way. The Far Eastern problem has created a division within big business similar to that which exists in regard to the European war. Both groups agree on appeasing Japan through the profitable sale of war materials, while denying a commensurate assistance to China. The interventionists, however, lean toward the policy of using China to bog down the Japanese war machine until such time as they can compel the Japanese rulers to accept a junior partnership with the United States in the joint exploitation of the Far East; the non-interventionists lean toward immediate full collaboration with Japan even if it means relinquishing certain American imperialist positions in the Pacific. The equivocal policy which the Roosevelt administration pursues toward the Japanese-Chinese conflict and toward the question of an understanding with the USSR shows that for the sake of its larger imperialist aims in Europe, it is prepared eventually to come to terms with Japan; what is chiefly at issue is the price.

This clinging to appeasement in the Far East emphasizes the fact that the differences within the capitalist class are not differences of principle, but of tactics. Appeasement and war are not opposites, but are, in fact, complementary. Chamberlain, the appeaser, overnight became Chamberlain, the war leader. So in our own country these two alternative lines of finance-capital find expression in the Roose-

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velt administration; in respect to the European war, however, the main trend at this time is toward prolonging the conflict and increasing American participation.

The tactical differences among the corporate overlords are largely a reflection of a conflict of economic interests among various sections of the capitalist class; other factors also operate and may in individual cases prove decisive, but at bottom, though the intellectual camp followers of both groups prefer to discover loftier motives, it is divergent economic interests that determine the cleavage between big business interventionists and non-interventionists. On the whole, it is the primary Wall Street monopolists, those most closely connected with war production and possessing the most extensive ties with Europe in the way of investment and trade, that are behind the William Allen White Committee. The America First and No Foreign War Committees represent for the most part secondary capitalist groupings which are less closely associated with war production and have certain conflicts with Wall Streets; they are concentrated to a large extent in the Midwest and Northwest. The House of Morgan and its satellites are heavily represented on the William Allen White Committee. Among the committee's leading members are two Morgan partners, Thomas W. Lamont and Henry P. Davison, the former being also a member of its advisory policy committee. J. P. Morgan himself has contributed financially. Other supporters of the committee include John W. Davis, Morgan lawyer; Gerard Swope, former head of the Morgan-controlled General Electric; Lewis W. Douglas, president of the Mutual Life Insurance Co., which is within the Morgan sphere of influence; Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Life, Fortune,* and *Time,* the latter of which was financed by a Morgan partner.

THE OTHER TORIES

Behind the America First Committee, with which Colonel Lindbergh is associated, is a different set of economic royalists. Its chairman, Gen. Robert E. Wood, is head of the Sears, Roebuck Co., Chicago mail order house which is in sharp competition with Morgan's Montgomery Ward. Among other leading members and financial supporters are Henry Ford, an independent finance-capitalist whose chief competitor is du Pont-Morgan's General Motors; Edward L. Ryerson, Jr., vice president of the Inland Steel Co., a member of the "independent" Little Steel group which competes with the Morgan-dominated US Steel and with Bethlehem Steel, in which Morgan interests are also entrenched; E. T. Weir, head of another member of the Little Steel group, the National Steel Corp.; Col. Robert McCormick, publisher of the Chicago *Tribune;* Jay Hormel, president of the meat packing firm of George A. Hormel & Co.; and Robert Douglas Stuart, Jr., son of the head of the Quaker Oats Co.

There are out-and-out Nazi sympathizers such as Ford and Lindbergh in the America First—No Foreign War group, but the majority, like the controlling forces in the William Allen White Committee, want to Nazify the country via the aid-to-Britain route. In fact, though they profess to be dedicated to keeping the country out of war, the America First patriots are not at all averse to the profitable war trade with Britain which is systematically undermining America's peace. This was explicitly stated by General Wood in a speech on October 4 before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; and even Henry Ford recently spoke up for loans to Britain. That speech of Wood's sheds light on the "peace" pretensions of the reactionary non-interventionists:

> Americans like myself feel that our true mission is in North America and South America. We stand today in an unrivalled position. With our resources and organizing ability we can develop, with our Canadian friends, an only partially developed continent like North America and a virgin continent like South America. The reorganization and proper development of Mexico alone would afford an outlet for our capital and energies for some time to come. And while I think we should try in every way to maintain the friendship of our neighbors to the South, I think we should also make it clearly understood that no government in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean South American countries will be tolerated unless it is friendly to the United States, and that, if necessary, we are prepared to use force to attain that object.

This statement becomes all the more significant when it is remembered that in regard to Latin-American policy there are practically no differences between the big business interventionists and non-interventionists. Thus America's men of wealth dream of empire behind the Janus mask of democracy and peace.

What about the question of a negotiated peace in Europe? This has become the watchword of the reactionary non-interventionists. And it is being echoed by the "Socialist," Norman Thomas. In his column in the *Socialist Call* of December 14, Thomas welcomed the aid of former Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy "in keeping America out of war"; he warned that unless a negotiated peace came soon, a British victory "might leave an exhausted Europe prey to bloody chaos or to Stalin." Thus the two wings of Social Democracy reproduce the divisions within the capitalist class, the right-wing Social-Democratic Federation and the trade union bureaucracy aligning themselves with the interventionists, and the Socialist Party, for the most part, with the appeasers. A peace negotiated by the imperialist powers is an imperialist peace, a continuation of war by other means. For the common people of all countries it would be as barren of real peace, as fraught with horror and peril as the negotiated peace of Versailles. On this question, too, the differences between interventionists and non-interventionists are purely tactical. The interventionists oppose a negotiated peace now only because Germany's position is so strong that such a peace would mean a German-British agreement directed at American imperialism.

On the other hand, the masters of America do not at all desire a smashing military defeat of Nazi Germany. In fact, both the American and British ruling classes fear the revolutionary possibilities of such a defeat; they have not forgotten Russia's 1917 or Germany's 1918. We find Raymond Clapper, Scripps-Howard writer who supports the Roosevelt administration's pro-war policy, writing (New York *World-Telegram,* December 28): "Once England has shown that Hitler's most carefully prepared attack cannot conquer the island, then and then only will England be able to talk terms with Hitler as an equal." Not a word here about the military defeat of Germany. And Walter Lippmann, Thomas W. Lamont's gift to the *Herald Tribune,* writes in the December 28 issue of that newspaper that while Hitler personally must be eliminated, "the eventual German negotiators must represent some kind of lawful authority in Germany, *be it only the army.*"

"PEACE" WITH ITALY

It is interesting to note, moreover, that while American and British imperialism oppose a negotiated peace with Germany at this time, *they are making frantic efforts to secure a negotiated peace with Italian fascism.* This is the meaning of Churchill's appeal to the Italian people, the monarchy, and the army (see our comment in the editorial section of this issue). Anne O'Hare McCormick reports in the New York *Times* that a diplomatic offensive has been launched by the American and British governments in Rome, as well as in Madrid and Vichy. While the Greeks bleed on the Albanian battlefront, their British and American masters bear secret gifts to their fascist foes.

But whatever the motives behind these proposals for a negotiated peace, the people of the United States and of Europe have need of a peace dictated not by the imperialists, but by themselves. This is the kind of peace, frustrating the predatory aims of both belligerent blocs, that is sought by the People's Convention, which meets in Manchester, England, January 12. Such a peace alone represents true internationalism, the brotherhood of peoples. It can come only through the active, organized struggle against war in every country, against every effort of the capitalists and the government to depress living standards and curtail democratic rights. Our best help to the common folk of England and of Europe is to defeat in our own country both the proponents of imperialist war and of a Nazi-dominated imperialist peace. As both these capitalist groups seek control of the new Congress, the genuine anti-war forces, represented by such organizations as the American Peace Mobilization, the CIO, and other groups, need to assert the will of the people to keep America out of war and keep fascism out of America. This is the best way to defend our country, to make America first in the worldwide battle of the men and women in the factories and offices and on the farms for a new life of peace, security, and freedom.

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The Pressure Boys Work Overtime

How the big business lobbies will try to steamroller the new Congress. The dollar-a-year men bore from within. The people's representatives fight back.

Washington.

POLITICAL labels won't be much help in trying to figure out the course of the incoming Seventy-seventh Congress. The programs of the two major parties have all but coalesced on the larger issues of foreign policy and "national defense." Nor will the old scrambled line-up of Republicans and tory Democrats versus New Dealers serve as a guide. Take conscription, for example, an issue on which New Dealers joined many of their erstwhile enemies against a congressional line-up which appeared equally confusing on the surface. All the old signposts of legislative conflict are disappearing, and new ones are taking their place.

The cooing of the doves of national unity will by no means be the only sounds heard in the halls of Congress. The session about to begin will resemble nothing so much as a great tug of war with deep-rooted economic and social groupings contending for the votes of representatives and senators. A very direct and important pull will be exerted by the Washington lobbies of big business now grown immensely in importance. Tugging on the other side will be the as yet largely unorganized forces of the people. In some respects the contest may appear uneven. But congressmen still scan the mail from back home and think of the always impending elections. In some states their decisions will be determined by the strength of organized labor, in others by the anti-war sentiment of the farmers. To fight back against the lobby of big business will be difficult, but not impossible.

THE HOUSING LOBBY

Washington business lobbies are, of course, nothing new. They have enjoyed considerable power for generations. But not since the Harding administration have they been as influential as they are today. And it is questionable whether there has ever before been a comparable integration between government and business, even in the brief heyday of the Blue Eagle. William S. Knudsen is a conspicuous symbol of corporate enterprise at the helm of government.

Consider the housing situation for an example of an effective lobby working from the inside. Private realty and building interests have long been out to ruin the very modest, public low-rent housing program started by the administration a few years back. They have lobbied on Capitol Hill for some time, and have managed to obtain the sympathetic and active support of a number of congressmen. But they have delivered their most telling blows at the United States Housing Administration by taking over control of the Defense Housing Division of the Defense Commission. Head of this division is Charles F. Palmer, a prominent Georgia real estate man. His chief consultant is Morton Bodfish, executive vice president of the United States Saving and Loan League, one of the important realty outfits engaged in lobbying against USHA.

Palmer demanded, to start with, that all defense housing be handled by the Public Building Administration rather than by the USHA. When $290,000,000 was appropriated for defense housing, Palmer insisted that it be spent as sparingly as possible. He made it the primary criterion of his division that there be no interference with the prerogatives of private building interests. He said at a meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce that he wished to "assure private developers that government housing will not encroach upon their fields, at least until they have had a chance to perform. Further we must assure them that the government housing agencies have agreed in advance to dispose of government defense housing at the end of the emergency in such a way as not to destroy private investment in higher-rental permanent residential property." Palmer has emphasized that defense housing must be kept as temporary as possible. He endorsed a project for using a Hudson River night boat as a dormitory in the Navy Yard at Portsmouth, N. H., as "an example of portable housing to be removed after an emergency."

The great American slum has obviously been included among those patriotic institutions which are essential for national defense. The frequent refusal of Palmer and his aides to permit any kind of public housing has meant skyrocketing rents, overcrowding, and an acute danger of epidemics in Hartford, Quincy, Columbus, and other booming centers of arms production. And the low-quality temporary type of housing which Palmer has approved in absolute emergencies will become the slums of the future. Labor groups anxious to make one last effort to save USHA before all its funds are completely exhausted will have to contend with the powerful lobby of the real estate interests entrenched in the Defense Commission.

THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS

Or take the case of H. B. Zachary if you want to see the lobbyist in action as prophet and social planner. Mr. Zachary is the head of that influential Washington lobby, the Associated General Contractors of America Inc. It was he who urged the House Appropriations Committee to prohibit WPA from handling construction work and to let private contractors do the job through PWA. Zachary faced the problem of what to do with the displaced WPA workers with courage and foresight. "I would put them in the army, and those that did not want to go into the army could be put on the dole," he said. "I would teach them discipline, so that they would be of service to this country."

Zachary was not without honor as a prophet a year and two years ago. It was the Associated General Contractors who pioneered for the restrictions on WPA construction work which were incorporated in both the 1939 and 1940 WPA bills. Last year no less a statesman than Rep. Clifton Woodrum of Virginia introduced a bill which met the specifications of the contractors' full program for the destruction of WPA. The one thing Zachary apparently did not foresee was the extent to which the administration would plagiarize his ideas. For Messrs. Zachary and Roosevelt see eye to eye on the morale-building potentialities of the army and the need for cutting WPA to the bone in the interests of "national defense." So WPA is slated for another reduction in the new budget which will be made public within the next few days. And unless the President makes good his implied promise of last April and asks for a $500,000,000 deficiency appropriation, drastic slashes in WPA rolls will have to begin on March 1, four months before the 1942 fiscal year starts. Some of the first congressional fireworks of the session will probably materialize when the CIO, the Workers Alliance, and other groups insist that the administration come through and ask for a much needed deficiency grant.

There is also, of course, the dime-an-hour lobby of the Associated Farmers and the big canning interests still busy trying to get the Wage-Hour Act either repealed or emasculated. Some of the major demands of this lobby have been granted by the broad-minded Col. Philip Fleming, who, as administrator of the Act, has seen the point of view of the underpaid sweatshop workers in his speeches and the point of view of the unhappy manufacturers in his rulings. But the demand for amendments or suspension during the "emergency" of the Wage-Hour Act will continue. And with the kind assistance of Rep. Howard Smith of Virginia and Sen. Robert Taft of Ohio, the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce will resume their efforts to make the Wagner act a dead letter.

BRASS HATS

But the most effective job for the anti-labor lobby is being done by the "dollar-a-year" men in the Defense Commission, and by the brass hats in the War and Navy Departments. Bill Knudsen has already begun to attack the unpatriotic five-day week. Admiral Roy Speer of the Navy Department's Bureau of Supplies has made it plain that he considers the Walsh-Healey act a sinister fifth-column measure.

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The danger of anti-strike legislation at these sessions will be immeasurably increased by pressure from the Defense Commission. Many of the "dollar-a-year" men on the Commission agree with Representative Smith that a picket line is equivalent to treason. Anti-labor bills at the Seventy-seventh Congress will come wrapped up in an American flag, and stamped with an official seal. The War Department's anti-sabotage bill which passed a few weeks ago is broad enough to hit at trade unions, and it may well become a model for more drastic measures.

Business men in Washington who want to get results lean increasingly on the "dollar-a-year" men. When John Pew, head of the Sun Shipbuilding Yards and uncle of the well known Republican politico, Joe Pew, wanted a Labor Board case quashed, he went directly to James V. Forrestal of the banking firm of Dillon, Read & Co., who is Undersecretary of the Navy. Forrestal came through with only a week's delay in the Labor Board hearings, but he may do better later on. The Standard Oil men on the Defense Commission took care of holding up and later toning down the anti-trust suits against all the big oil companies.

The two major foreign policy lobbies both have substantial business backing. Ford is not the only big industrialist who supports the appeasement trend represented by the America First and the No Foreign War Committees. The warm reception for isolationist and "peace" speeches at the recent National Association of Manufacturers' Convention indicates that the hardy specter of a Communist Europe is again disturbing the nation's industrialists. Despite its differences with the administration, the isolationist lobby agrees with the President and the rival aid-Britain lobby in supporting increased armaments for the United States and an aggressive American imperialism. The Morgan-financed William Allen White Committee performs an important semi-official function as an auxiliary to the administration. Clark Eichelberger, the committee's director, can frequently be seen darting in and out of doors in the State Department and in the Senate and House office buildings. But Eichelberger can hardly compare as a war lobbyist with Mr. Roosevelt. The President and his administrative officers play the decisive role in pressuring Congress along the step-by-step road to war.

Mandell

"Psst! That's Mrs. Glotz, our landlady."

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION

Lobbies in Washington are so important now not because they exercise an independent or self-sufficient role, but on the contrary because they are so well coordinated with government. It is not always easy to know where lobbying ends and government begins. Marx's definition of the state as the executive committee of the ruling class is a literally accurate description of what has been happening in the capital. Under the aegis of the "dollar-a-year" men, "national unity" of a sort is becoming a reality. Even prior to the formal entry of the nation into war, a coalition war government with the direct participation of business is taking shape.

Stopping the "national unity" steamroller at this session of Congress will be a tough job, of course. Bills limiting the right to strike, attempting to outlaw the Communist Party and other progressive groups, appropriating more billions for arms, cutting WPA and other social agencies in the government will be introduced. The most hopeful part of the picture is that the people don't want to get into this war, and Congress knows it. This was what suddenly made the conscription issue such a hot potato. Fear of retaliation from the voters will keep Congress a little wary, but it obviously won't be enough as the devious Wilson drama of 1917 repeats itself in a different setting with different actors.

Organization of the people back home to turn the heat on their congressmen is what will really count. This was done to a limited extent on some issues at the last session. Labor's Non-Partisan League did a pretty good job of bringing delegations of trade unions to Washington to urge Congress to defeat the various amendments to the Wagner act. Despite an almost unbelievably air-tight press boycott, the American Peace Mobilization managed to worry Congress plenty with its anti-conscription lobby early last September. APM is now planning a mid-January legislative conference in Washington, and the National Maritime Union together with other labor groups is planning to stage a large peace parade in the capital. Activities of this sort, letters, telegrams, mass meetings, delegations to Washington, are enormously important at the present time, more important than most people realize. They represent the beginning of the great people's lobby, and ultimately of the people's peace party, which must be organized quickly to counteract the business lobbies and the war profiteers if Washington is not soon to become a war capital.

ADAM LAPIN.

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A Billion Dollars in Mexico

That's Wall Street's "stake" in our neighboring country. How it works to undermine the labor movement. Joseph North's concluding article.

Mexico City.

AT THE stroke of noon every streetcar in the capital stopped dead. The motorman and conductor climbed down, the motorman with his steering crank in his hand, the passengers after him. *"Huelga?"* one of them asked. "Strike?" The motorman nodded. Up the main avenue festooned with a network of electric light bulbs in the Mexican national colors, sped the big limousines bearing the high-hatted delegations to the inaugural ceremonies on the Zocalo. Vice President Wallace must have seen the dead cars when he finished his little speech in Cortez' palace. The demonstration of empty trolley cars sprawling on the corners all through the city was in a real sense a protest against the foreign moneymen who had swarmed into town. The traction employes had special reason for their action. A long year ago they had been awarded an increase in pay but the companies stalled. Meetings of representatives of "capital and labor" continued interminably, stenographers took endless notes, but the same wage scale obtained. So the workingmen decided upon a two-hour-a-day stoppage during the festivities to underscore the injustice they suffered. They belonged to the CTM—the Confederation of Mexican Trade Unions—had nothing in common with the Almazanistas who rioted before the American Embassy. I know the high-hatted diplomats pondered nervously over the demonstration, and I wondered what went through David Dubinsky's mind when he ran across this stoppage. Mr. Dubinsky, you will recall, was part of the Wallace entourage. I know, too, what answer he would have gotten if he had stopped to ask any man on the street. The answer is one that Mr. Dubinsky himself may have made long years ago: imperialist exploitation. But it's hard to say that when you wear a high silk hat.

The episode of the trolley cars was one typical of thousands. All the propaganda of the good to be derived by the importation of foreign capital "to increase the productive capacities of the nation" left the man in the street cold. The city transport lines belong to American, British and Belgian capitalists (the latter now undoubtedly Nazi-controlled). For a year now the monopoly has subverted the decision of an arbitration board, refusing to pay a few centavos more an hour. This monopoly hires many men. The major electric power enterprise is the Mexican Light & Power Co. which exploits an area close to 3,000 square miles about the principal city of the land. This company is promoted by Canadian, British, and Belgian capital. The second largest is the Mexican Electric Companies, a subsidiary of the Morgan-controlled Electric Bond & Share. I ran into the tender operations of the latter corporation in Manzanilla, Cuba, half a year ago, where it operates the water supply and charges rates so high that the majority of the townsfolk must beg and steal water. And here in Mexico City I encountered the handiwork of American imperialism intertwined with other exploiters—and again, the same old story. The native battling for his meager rights, and the monopolists fighting tooth and nail to keep him to a substandard scale of life.

As it is in the case of the trolley workers here, so it is in the majority of all Mexican industry, largely controlled by foreign capital. This was felt keenly by all honest men to whom I spoke: Mexican labor leaders, newspapermen, staff writers on *El Popular,* the daily paper of the CTM. I learned at first hand how the pressure of foreign imperialisms bears heavier upon the Mexican working-class movement than is commonly recognized by progressives in the United States. "Ours is a semi-colonial land from which international capital seeks fantastic profits," a labor leader told me. (For reasons of his own he asked me to withhold his name.) He speaks good English and has read widely in American economic journals. He pulled a file of papers and magazines from his desk, waved them at me. Among them were the March 1940 edition of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* devoted to Mexico. Also on hand were copies of the special Mexican edition of the *Journal of Commerce,* of Aug. 27, 1940; a reprint of Hartley W. Barclay's rabid article from the October 1938 issue of *Mill and Factory,* published in New York.

This labor leader described a long-term plot against the organized working people of his country. He made many things clear to me. "Our troubles," he said, "begin about 2,000 miles away from here. A street in your Manhattan called Wall." He said the plot against Mexico, and particularly against the labor movement, "is not an overnight proposition. Look through these journals from your own country and you will see." He felt that ever since the people of his country went into the offensive, approximately at the time of Cardenas' induction into office in 1934, "The big companies have been biding their time, scheming, battling secretly, waiting for the best moment to counter-attack. They are counter-attacking violently now."

He told me these imperialists fear the labor movement "more than the devil himself. They see in our Labor Code the essence of their misfortune. Though the foreign boss and our native capitalist may hate each other with that consuming hatred that grows out of greed," he said in his fine Latin way, "they have common ground in fighting labor."

Then he sat down to prove his point: "Look at this," he said, quoting from Hartley W. Barclay's article from *Mill and Factory:*

> The Mexican Expropriation Law hangs over the head of every businessman in Mexico like the sword of Damocles. It is a constant threat to every classification of business and may be put into effect in any case at any time to force companies to negotiate with CTM unions for new contracts. . . . It may not be long before similar laws are in effect in the majority of nations in the Western Hemisphere.

He looked up at me. "You see why they have this full dress offensive against *us now at this inauguration?* They fear that what the Mexican has done may be duplicated 'in the majority of the nations in the Western Hemisphere.' And it might," he said.

Then he quoted from the *Annals* article by Edgar Turlington:

> The restrictions on the acquisition of lands and on concessions are less hampering to foreign enterprise in Mexico than is the Labor code as it is now administered.

He wasn't through proving his point. He then took a copy of the *Journal of Commerce,* the Aug. 27, 1940, edition:

> In order to attract foreign capital, however, it is axiomatic that Mexico must modify the economic and social policies pursued during the past six years. She must modify her economic policies so as to cease discouraging foreigners from investing their funds within the country. This will require a modification of the labor legislation. . . .

He looked at me. "Do you want more proof? I can get it for you." I assured him I had seen enough. But he was too full of his grief, and he opened the copy of the March 1940 *Annals* to Turlington's article again. "Here," he said, "are the figures of foreign holdings in Mexico as of 1935. See for yourself. Outside of oil they haven't changed materially." I read:

Industry	*Foreign Investment*
Manufacturing	$ 48,300,000
Distribution	87,000,000
Agriculture	178,900,000
Mining and Smelting	396,300,000
Oil (Before the expropriation in 1938)	381,500,000
Railroads	196,400,000
Public Utilities	226,000,000
Miscellaneous	25,200,000
	$1,539,700,000

My friend grew angrier as we scanned the statistics. "This is the bulk of Mexican industrial investment. In foreign capital's hands. And according to the same sources, two-thirds of all foreign investments here are American. And what worries them about us? What agitates them about the Mexican workingman? Here, look here." He returned to the special edition of the *Journal of Commerce* and read scornfully:

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Demands for vacations with pay, medical services for workers and their families, pensions and retirement allowances, hospitalization and other concessions have mounted constantly. Employers have faced the dreary prospect of new sweeping demands and protracted negotiations every two years or sooner, when a pretext can be found, when a collective agreement expires.

"Dreary prospect!" he repeated. "The dreary prospect of permitting the Mexican worker to live like a man. There you have it. Dreary prospect . . . dreary prospect." It was hard not to become infected by my friend's mood. He wasn't through with his primary lesson in Mexican economics. He grasped the *Annals* again. "Look at this mealy-mouthed economist here," he said referring to Mr. Turlington's article. He quoted:

No impartial person reading these provisions [the Labor Code] could fail to applaud them in principle. . . . In practice, the provisions of the Code, implementing the provisions of the Constitution, have led to the gravest difficulties. The labor troubles which ended in the expropriation of the oil properties were different only in intensity from the labor troubles experienced by other large enterprises in Mexico.

He shook his head. "So long as the Labor Code remains in the books, in principle, it meets the approbation of Mr. Turlington. But when it comes to practice it leads to the gravest difficulties. There," he said, "all that is the basis for this talk about Good Neighborism, about mutual defense, about solidarity. Thus," he said, "thus imperialism works."

He took me to see the Workers Battalions drilling under the Monument of the Mexican Revolution. There they were, in their blue denims, drilling with make-believe rifles. I had seen them a number of times before with those broomsticks they handle as guns. They marched back and forth, drilling ardently. My friend watched them thoughtfully. "You know," he said, "for some reason I'm reminded of Disraeli, the great British politician. Did you know the first article he ever published was an advertising tract to promote a mining company in Mexico? When it didn't work out so well, and the great Disraeli and his colleagues failed to net the profits they expected, he blamed it upon the Mexican people and their government. 'Unsettled conditions there,' he wrote. 'Too many revolutions.' That was more than a century ago. And today your great statesmen are saying the same thing. Right down the street there"—he pointed to Mexico's ritziest hotel, the Reforma, where the Americans were staying, "they're saying the same things today."

The perspectives? They remain more or less as I described them six months ago—except that the conditions have become tougher, the pressure of American imperialism more relentless. As the Communist Party of Mexico pointed out as far back as last March, the only program to prevent national betrayal was to strengthen the combination of all popular, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist forces. This means the transformation of the Party of the Mexican Revolution into a genuine anti-imperialist Popular Front which would give fullest expression to the peasants, the trade unions, the urban middle classes. The central role must, of course, be played by the labor movement. It must strike out independently, not wait for leadership by the liberal bourgeoisie. Large sections of the latter have already exposed their mettle under fire: they have made serious concessions to the demands of Yankee imperialism. An independent position requires an aggressive policy to improve the living standards of the common folk. It must lead to the re-establishment of the agrarian reform which slowed down dangerously in Cardenas' last two years. The masses of Mexico strain to go on the offensive to retain the gains of their agrarian revolution for which hundreds of thousands have died. They wish to protect their national sovereignty. And only labor can lead the resurgence.

To date the leadership of the CTM, under Lombardo Toledano, has not exhibited the necessary initiative to halt the inroads of reaction, aggravated by the pressure of various imperialisms, chiefly that of Wall Street. But welling up from below is the popular demand to get going, to safeguard the improvements won the past decade. I felt that in my 1,500-mile trip through the country. This uneasiness is manifested by growing sections of the trade union movement. A token of this appeared last week when the first national union of Hotel and Restaurant Workers was established, and Toledano spoke. He declared that the onward march of the Revolution depended upon the unity of the proletariat. He excoriated their enemies, particularly the so-called National Anti-Communist Workers' Bloc. "We know," he said, "what is behind this so-called anti-Communist struggle. The CTM is not Communist and has never been so. It is an independent trade union organization but a revolutionary one. And it has never been anti-Communist and can never be so because it includes in its ranks Communists as well as anarcho-syndicalists and people of various political beliefs, but all united in the common idea of the class struggle." He pointed out that reaction moves first against the Communists, and "second against the revolutionary labor movement, whatever its color, to convert the workers' movement into a herd of castrates at the service of professional politicos to deprive it of its independence in the class struggle."

These words correspond to the beliefs of the people, to their deepest instincts for unity. Unfortunately, Toledano did not tell quite the whole story. The plotting of Yankee imperialism does not appear in his recital. This is crucial. Unless Mexican labor leaders arrive at the realization that Wall Street remains their principal peril, that *imperialismo Yanqui* menaces the national gains of the 1910 Revolution, they will not be tackling their main problem. Millions agree with the Communists who have been the most clear-sighted and articulate on this score. The gentlemen who dream of hemispheric conquest know it. I saw this at first hand when I attended the Havana conference six months ago. One of the measures adopted was the plan to establish a coordinated police force for the entire continent. J. Edgar Hoover recently invited the police chiefs of every Latin-American nation to come to America to study his technique. Under pretext of "ousting the Reds" they plot to intervene against every progressive movement down the continent. It is a stale, threadbare plot, one that every canny progressive in the United States understands.

As an American citizen I am deeply aggrieved at our administration's conspiracy against our neighbors. I have visited our Latin-American brothers and have seen the vast odds against which they battle so well. In Mexico they fight in a politico-economic Walpurgis night in which every twentieth century hobgoblin figures: feudalism, capitalism, imperialism. They are contesting man-made evils and nature's: illiteracy and the drought, disease and the desert. They have made great advances but now our moneyed men seek to obliterate these advances, to flatten Mexican sovereignty under the Wall Street juggernaut.

I see, too, that American imperialism has nothing to offer. It casts out the bait of loans, of capital, but that will never benefit the Mexican. My acquaintance, the Leon shoe manufacturer whom I described in a previous article, suspected that. "We need capital," he said, "but how do I know that if we invite American money down here Thom McAn and Florsheim won't put me out of business." There are thousands more small industrialists like him, thinking the same way. I saw them, bankrupt, in the defunct shoe manufacturing center of Manzanilla, Cuba—a dead city, killed by the weighted provisions of the falsely-named Reciprocity Act. Cuba, in general, is an example of American financial penetration: Cuban business lies prostrate under Yankee monopoly capitalism. The Mexican is not unaware of this.

No. American imperialism, any imperialism, has no good to offer to the nations of Latin America, to Mexico. The sooner all honest Mexican leaders realize that, the better for their national sovereignty. I can see, too, that all the elements are present in Mexico for a great national resurgence: a reawakening of all strata in the populace, despite the most corrupt, top-business circles like those headed by Portes Gil, men chained to Wall Street. National unity based primarily upon an anti-imperialist basis is the salvation. The quicker President Camacho's administration realizes this, the better. The sooner the labor leaders of Mexico act upon this realization—and the proletariat must lead in the organization of national unity—the better. The masses sense this. The men I saw marching and countermarching under the Monument of the Revolution realize this instinctively. Their fathers shed too much blood in the past century to underestimate it. There is a profound reason why they march and why their brothers out in the field call their patches of land "El Futuro" and why their children sing a song called "The Romance of the Oil Expropriation."

JOSEPH NORTH.

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Call It Love

You cannot tear out of your life ten years of living. But it happened to him as it had to others. A short story by Alvah Bessie.

THE BAGS were heavy and the late afternoon sun beat upon the street. He could feel the sweat running down his neck, feel the weight of the sun on his back and shoulders, the heat on his face, reflected from the pavement. He shifted the bags, aware that he was tired and uncomfortable, that the bags were a burden he would gladly have tossed aside. It would have been more pleasant (pleasant!) to have taken a cab, but there would have been no address to give the driver.

On Seventh Avenue and 29th he saw a sign—*Furnished Rooms,* set the bags down, wiped his face and neck with his handkerchief, and rang the bell. He stood at the bottom of the three steps that led to the door and looked back into the street, thinking is this where I will live? Will I come out of this doorway every morning on the way to work? Across the avenue a sign said *Elite Laundry* and another *Cafeteria.*

The door opened and a heavy woman with dirty eyeglasses said, "Yes?" in the everlasting hypocritical voice of landladies.

"Have you a single room?" he said.

"This way."

He set the bags inside the door and followed her heavy body up the dark stairs, smelling that smell again (after ten years), the smell of dust and used air and cheap cooking from the downstairs apartment. Without a word they climbed two flights, the landlady breathing heavily, a slight odor of perspiration coming to him behind her on the stairs.

On the third floor she stepped into a narrow hallway, crossed a dark alcove into a space where two doors faced each other at a wide angle, and opened one.

"Now this is a very nice room," she said, turning at the door for him to walk in front. He took a step into the room and his heart sank, for there it was again: the small narrow room with the white enameled bed, the worn table and the worn chair, the dusty white curtains opening on an areaway—all that he had escaped so many years ago, and so nearly forgotten. The ten years of marriage, in New York, in New Jersey, in Connecticut, were as a day, and the personality of those many rooms he had inhabited so many years ago, returned to him. In their essentials they were all alike; in the very fact of their existence, they were unfit for human habitation: homes for the homeless, four walls for the lonely, shelter for the poor—sitting in shirtsleeves in the evening reading the newspaper, walking up and down over the worn scrap of carpet, leaning out the window, the ledge hard on your elbows.

For something to say that would conceal what he was feeling, he said, "How much?"

"Six dollars," the landlady said, and he turned and walked past her out the door, saying, "It's awfully small." He was embarrassed by her presence, by the intimation that perhaps she understood some of what he felt, that perhaps she thought him strange.

"I have a larger room," she said, "for eight."

His foot was on the stair; his hand was on the banister. He was overcome by a curious sense of helplessness, a frantic desire to escape from the place, and not enter another place like it, an urge to go back home and say to her, "What the hell, Jane; let's call the whole thing off," and she would laugh, and they would hold each other and laugh like hell. He sighed with the relief of that expectation, almost as though he actually believed it could happen that way.

"No, thanks," he said.

"Don't you even want to *see* it?" the landlady said in a querulous voice. It was an effort for him to turn in his rapid flight down the stairs and say politely, "Thank you, no. I think I know where I'm going to stay." And the moment he said it, he knew what an absurd thing it was to say.

On the street, the bags were heavy in his hands; there was a blister in one palm and he smiled, thinking how, during the three years they had lived in the country, in New Jersey, in Connecticut, his hands had been hard, calloused from the ax handle, the saw, from carrying the stone to build a garden walk. He knew as he walked that he could not take a furnished room, and he said to himself, "Look for a hotel," even though he knew it was more than he could afford, that a time was coming, not so distant now, when —why *now* it would be necessary to earn even more than he was earning, to support the kid, to support himself, to help till Jane could find work to do. This is ridiculous, he thought; this has not happened; in a day or so I'll go home, shove the bags through the door and say, Hi there, as though I were returning from a trip, and she will say, Hi there, stranger, and they would laugh and buy a bottle of Irish whiskey and get some ice cubes out of the Frigidaire, and sit down and have a good laugh at themselves.

It had happened to others; perhaps it would even happen again. For you cannot tear out of your life the roots of ten years' living, ten years of living in the same rooms, the same houses, the same beds, thinking the same thoughts, worrying over the same bills, sharing the few small triumphs of a meager life. Ten years had put some gray hairs in her head; some wrinkles in his face. And the kid was five. He walked now, shifting the bags from hand to hand every three blocks; he made a point of that—three blocks, no more, no less. It was a routine; it was something to do.

There was a hotel down the block, at Seventh and 19th, with a blue banner hanging on a flagpole from the second floor. *Rooms,* it said, *With Bath, $1.50 and $2.00.* He was displeased by that banner; the mark of cheapness, sleaziness. A hotel that hung a banner out—it was a worn, converted apartment house; red brick with rococo ornamentation and fire-escapes on the avenue. The lobby was worn, the desk had an electrical sign that said *Room Clerk,* and there was an effeminate young man behind the desk, wearing a gray linen coat, his hair slicked down and parted in the middle.

"How much is a single room with bath?" he said, and the clerk said, "I can give you a very nice room for ten dollars on the eleventh floor. For one?"

He put the bags down and said, "For one. I'll take a look at it," and went up in the elevator with the porter. There was a husky young woman in a nurse's uniform in the elevator; her hair was bright and her cheeks were rouged.

"Afternoon, Miss Reilly," said the porter. "Nice afternoon."

"Too hot," Miss Reilly said, and got off on the ninth.

The elevator creaked and rattled and jarred from side to side as though it were loose in its tracks; it was slow. Down the carpeted hall the porter opened a room and drew a shade. There were warped French windows looking east over the city; there was a yellow bedspread on the double bed and a battered dresser with a red velvet throw. The walls were a faded yellow and cracked; the bathroom was dark, the equipment old and worn. He went downstairs and said, "I'll take it," and signed his name, John A. Field.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Field," the clerk said. "I quoted that room wrong to you. It's eleven dollars, not ten."

"Well," he said.

"I'm new here," the clerk said. "I'm sorry, sir," and suddenly Field was overcome with exhaustion. He said, "O.K.," and the porter took his bags and they were riding up again.

"That fellow's a fag," the porter said, turning from the lever that controlled the car. "He's a fag and he makes a lot of trouble around here."

Field wondered with faint interest what the clerk had done or did that made trouble, but all he said was "Is that so?" and they stopped short of the eleventh floor. The porter started the car again, stopped it a good foot and a half above the landing, then brought it down.

"That was a good guess," Field said with a smile, and the operator gave him a dirty

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look, picked up the bags, and took them to the room; he opened the windows, patted the bed, looked in the bathroom, and came out again and stood there.

"Can you send me up a drink?"

"We ain't got a bar," the porter said, "but I can git you a bottle."

"Make it a quart of Bushmill's Irish," he said, and gave the man the money. "And some ice."

The door closed and he threw the two bags on the bed, opened them and stood looking at them. Then, methodically, he brought out the things he had packed, trying not to think what he was doing, feeling all the time that any moment the phone would ring and she would say, "What the hell, Jack, come on home and—" but how could she know where he was staying? He laughed, and tugged at the dresser drawers. They stuck.

He took out the underwear and put it in the top right-hand drawer; he took the four books and laid them on the dresser top. He frowned to see that the shirts were wrinkled, and shook them, laid them in the second drawer, took out the toilet articles and brought them into the bathroom, stowed them in the cabinet. There was a small hook in the doorway on which he hung the razor strop.

In the pocket of the grip there was a snapshot of the kid, and he found the four thumbtacks he'd put in the bag, and tacked the snapshot on the wall, next to the mirror in the dresser. He looked at the kid, squatting there in her short dress, grinning at the camera, the kitten squirming in her hands. He winked at it and said, "Hi, there," then turned on his heel and opened the larger bag, the Gladstone, took out the two light suits and shook them out, hung them in the closet. There was a pair of slippers, and he stood them side by side under the bed; then he sat on the bed and took off his shoes, slipped his feet into the slippers. The armchair was fairly comfortable; he sat in it and lit a cigarette, frowned at the ashtray, which was pink, and made a mental note to buy another.

The elevator man knocked on the door with a bottle wrapped in paper and a pitcher of cracked ice. "Thanks," Field said, tipped him, and waited for the man to go before he poured.

"Frankly," she had said, "there's no point in going on; don't you think so? Why not call the whole thing off?" It was all very friendly, very amicable.

"I'm satisfied," he had said. "There's nothing more I want," but as he said it, he had cursed himself for a coward, determined to speak, then held his tongue.

She had looked at him with her kindest smile, and it didn't matter whether she said anything more or not, because he knew that she had spoken the truth and was still speaking it. It was a washout; it was a bore; it was no good to make a pretense of living in the same old way, the two of them going opposite directions, meeting politely for dinner, politely between the sheets on rare occasions. Call it love or call it habit; he knew

Michaels

"His Lordship Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, Viscount Halifax, K.G., P.C., G.C.F.I., G.C.I.E."

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sitting there before her that there was no way of getting along without her, but the sense of cowardice still remained. Don't you know whether you love the woman? he said to himself; after ten years, can't you tell whether you want a wife or a housekeeper? There was some relief in the idea of going away for good, and there was something else again.

"This is not a moving picture," he had said.

She smiled and lifted her hands, then shrugged her shoulders.

"Call it anything you like," she said. "It's been dead a long time now; we can't bring it back to life again."

Then he knew that he would have to go, and in order to go he had to play a trick on himself. He gripped the arms of the chair and shouted, "Damn it all, you talk like a melodrama! I'll *go!*"

He rose and dashed for the bedroom, dragged out the bags and hastily packed them, aware that she was standing behind him in the room, watching him with those wide, deep eyes, that firm, sad mouth. She spoke.

"You don't have to go right now," she said. (It was ten o'clock at night.) "You might as well stay and think it over. Where will you go tonight?"

"To a hotel," he said, viciously; then sadly, "I'll look for another place after work tomorrow."

"Take it easy, brother," she said, but he jammed the suitcase shut and flung into his raincoat and started for the door.

"Have a nice time," he said, and saw her turn away. Then he was gone.

The whiskey was moving in his body and it was growing dark over the city. He had called from the office that day; his voice dry and meticulous. He said he would come over to see the kid regularly, to bring money, and she had said to come whenever he wanted to, come for dinner any time you're feeling low. I'll let you know where I am, he said.

He went to the window and looked down the eleven stories to the street; the cars had switched on their lights, and over the city was the low continuous murmur that may be heard all day and night if you are listening. In how many rooms, in how many windows, behind how many doors? he thought, and stared back into the darkened room. He moved into it and around it drunkenly; he stumbled a couple of times, aware that he was behaving as though he were actually drunk. Into the darkened room he said aloud, "Is there anything genuine about you, Mr. Field?" He lifted the house phone, called her number, and before she answered, hung it up again. He could imagine her wondering who it was, whether it was he, what had possessed him to hang up. He took another drink.

The loneliness in him coiled and congealed; the emptiness ached. He picked up the phone again and said to the clerk, "Connect me with Miss Reilly." The receiver wobbled in his hand, and he put his lips closer to the mouthpiece, swallowed once or twice, thinking. You can't do it; you never did it in your life, but you've wanted to do it in your life, but you've never done it. Come speak to me, come talk to me, come be with me.

"Hello," the voice said pleasantly, and he swallowed.

"Miss Reilly," he said, "how are you?"

"I'm fine," she said.

"That's good," he said. "That's very good. You don't know me."

"What?"

"I said, you don't know me, but I'm the gent in 1107."

"Oh?" she said.

"Are you Irish?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not Irish, but I have some Irish whiskey, and I thought seeing as how you were Irish you might like to come up here and have a drink of Irish whiskey with me."

"I'm not dressed yet," she said.

"Take your time," he said. "Take all the time you want, but I think it would be nice if you came up here and had a drink of Irish whiskey. This is not a moving picture."

"All rightie," said the voice, and he said, "See you later."

"All rightie," the voice said, and he sat there, another drink in his hand, gulping it fast and swishing the ice around in the glass.

Now what is going to happen? he thought, and what is going to happen? And could you do a thing like that if you were in love with your wife and so forth? He lit the floor lamp and straightened up the room with exaggerated care, brushing at the ashes he had spilled on the carpet. He went into the bathroom and washed his hands and face and combed his hair, and wondered how it would happen when it began to happen, and what it would be like. "Miss Reilly," he said into the mirror, "are you lonely, Miss Reilly; please, Miss Reilly, don't be lonely; you are not alone in the world and there are a lot of people in the world who are lonely too and they are not alone in the world either."

Then he sat in the armchair again, feeling slightly dizzy with expectation and something that approached happiness. He listened carefully for a knock on the door. It was silent in the carpeted hallway outside, but he could hear the elevator running, clanking and wheezing on its tracks, but it did not stop at his floor. He lit a cigarette, and then opened the window so the room would not be smoky when she came; he started to pour a drink, but poured it back into the bottle, so he would be in full possession of his senses. He thought of Miss Reilly as he had seen her that once in the elevator, sweet in her cleanliness and dazzling in her white starched uniform, and he wondered if she would still be wearing it; it looked so antiseptic, so healthy. You would never know, he thought, looking at a person's face, smiling, radiant, that inside they were all alone and waiting in a room for the telephone to ring, and that must be the reason she said all rightie. He became aware that he was tapping with his foot, and he consciously stopped tapping. Behind how many doors, waiting? In how many darkened rooms? You must not lose touch, he thought; you must keep contact; and even if that was the end, this might well be the beginning, or if not the beginning, *a* beginning, a re-establishment of contact, the first painful knitting of the wound.

His toe was tapping all by itself, so he picked up the telephone again and said, "Connect me with Miss Reilly." It was some time before she answered, and then he said, "I thought you were coming up to have a drink of Irish whiskey with me, Miss Reilly."

"Who is this anyhow?" she said.

"My name is Field and I'm in 1107, and I thought you'd like—"

"Oh," she said, "I'm *so* sorry. I thought you were my friend who's waiting downstairs for me."

"Who?"

"I'm going out," she said. "My friend is waiting downstairs."

"O.K.," he said. "Think nothing of it."

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Think nothing of it," he said, and hung up. You must not be afraid of me, he thought; I would not harm you for the world. He moved to the door and went into the hall, rang the elevator bell. I'll go right down there, he thought, and bang on the door. I'll hammer on it till she opens it.

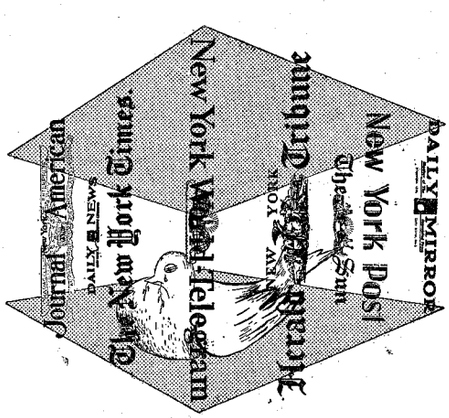
The car came and he went down. At the ninth floor the car stopped again and Miss Reilly got in, wearing a metallic blue satin dress and a red fox fur, and looking nothing like a nurse. She glanced at him, but said nothing, and he said nothing, standing in the back of the car. She doesn't know I—he thought; she doesn't know it's me.

At the ground floor she was met by a tall, broad-shouldered young man, wearing a light tan jacket, who took off his hat and kissed her on the mouth. It was surprising how little she looked like a nurse, now that she had changed her clothes. She took the young man's arm and walked out of the lobby with him, laughing.

"That good whiskey, boss?" the porter said, grinning at him.

"The best," he said.

ALVAH BESSIE.



Dove

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Two Letters from London

The grim courage of women whose homes are bombed day and night. They take no comfort in knowing that German homes are also being destroyed.

Central London, October 1940.

DEAR ——: I don't know how bad the picture is painted in your press of what is happening to us, nor how to give you an objective description of just what it is like. It is now worse than what we experienced in Spain, though not worse than the Spanish women suffered when they lost their all. Nor have we been driven from our native soil by an invading army as they were. Now that the evenings are getting darker London goes to shelter with the dusk. Many people enter the Tubes quite early in the day. Last Sunday, for example, I passed Mornington Crescent Underground Station about half past two in the afternoon and there was already a long queue of people with their bedding waiting admittance in order to get good places for the night. The thought of the little children who were amongst them going into the depths of the earth at three o'clock on a sunny Sunday afternoon, not to come out again till six o'clock the next morning, made me quite sick. How glad I am that my two children are not here, though it makes me ashamed to have been fortunate enough to send them away to Wales where they are safe and happy in the mountains.

A very large number of people would let their children go away if they could be surer that they would be well cared for. But experience with the method of billeting has made numbers of parents bring their children back, often more than once, because one cannot tell whether they would be put into a good home, or into a home where they will not be happy. Also a large number of mothers would go away with their children if they could be assured that they would be billeted with their children, and that their husbands would be able to get meals, laundry, and things like that done for them. Hundreds of others will not go away because they have some old person who does not come under any of the present schemes, and needs that loving care that old people must constantly have. So these heroic women remain, and they hush their children through the long crowded hours in the Tubes and cherish their old folk, and bring them all up in the morning and go home and make the house clean and cook meals and wash clothes and get the man's evening meal ready, and down again to the bowels of the earth. This is the morale of London women. It is a grim heroism. They know what self-sacrifice is.

I talk to such women sometimes, often when a raid takes place while they are in the building where I work, and we all go down to the shelter together. They tell about their homes, on which they have worked for ten, fifteen, twenty years "to keep things nice for the children," which have been destroyed or partly destroyed. This is the work of their whole lives gone, and their feeling is that nobody cares. During the first few days I noticed a tendency to try and cheer themselves up by saying, "Well, I hope we're doing it to them good and proper!" But that is not heard now, because they have begun to ask themselves, "What is the good of it all?" There is no comfort in the thought that another woman's home has gone too like yours, whatever nationality the other woman may be. We are just middle-class triers, those of us who do try to be helpful. But those women are the root and basis of English life, and they will be the ones who will find the way out.

We are getting used to finding our landmarks gone when we pass through familiar streets. Mr. Churchill said last week that if you stood on Parliament Hill you could not see that it made any difference to the familiar outline of London. I haven't been there to see. He also said that at this rate it would take ten years to finish London completely, but I haven't found anyone at all who was comforted by that thought. The general reply was: "Yes, but it only takes ten seconds to smash my home to smithereens when the bomb falls on it."

A. and I continue to sleep upstairs in bed. It seems by far the most sensible thing to do, as we haven't a good shelter nearby. It is impossible for us to pack up and get underground before the hours of darkness. A. works one week from seven in the morning until two in the afternoon, the next week from twelve to seven in the evening. She cannot possibly get anything done unless she is at home sometime. Neither can I. I could sleep in a Tube (or try to sleep) but I am never home before six and must prepare and cook a meal and wash my clothes and make the house clean. So we carry on normally and sleep in bed. I worry so much about my children, now that they have only me. It was different when there were two of us. I've done everything I can to make things easy for anyone to get help for them if something gets me, and that's all I can do.

Amongst all those who were in Spain I find the same expression: "I never felt like this there." Of course, *you* will understand the many reasons why this is different. However, we know what we have to do and we are doing it in our various ways. All the women who went to Spain are working magnificently now.

Butter ration is back to two ounces a week. Since A. takes hers to her husband in the hospital, we just eat butter at one meal (extravagantly) and spend the rest of the week on margarine or rare dripping. This is the shortage I feel most acutely personally, as butter was my principal vice, my standby and the thing I enjoyed at every meal. Besides after I was ill last year, butter was ordered as part of my diet.

What They Prove

A DEVOTED reader of NEW MASSES sends us these letters. The second one comes from her mother, the first from a personal friend. These letters tell the story of the heroism of the British common people, especially of the women. But we draw a moral from these letters quite different from the moral which the New York *Times* draws from the letters it has been printing. For one thing, these letters do not arouse support for the Churchill government. On the contrary, they arouse disgust and anger with the men who brought this war on, failed to tend to the people's needs for a whole year, and still fail to do so. The second thing which strikes us is the self-reliance of the Londoners: their "shelter" organization, *their* newspapers, their hope for a better world. This is of cardinal importance. For we are being told that the only alternative to a continuation of the war under Churchill is submission to Hitler.

We are being told that the only way Hitlerism can be defeated is by the sacrifice of everything the British workers have built up in a hundred years. But these letters deny that. They show that the British people have a third alternative, the only real alternative. They have the resourcefulness, the intelligence, the potential strength to take political power into their own hands, away from the men who got them into this misery. By such action, they would rock the foundations of fascism in Europe and simultaneously destroy the system of imperialism which has oppressed Britain and half the colonial world so long. Until this happens, the perspective is only a series of horrible wars, of organized counter-revolution, of a gradual reduction of civilization until all peoples in the capitalist world are living in the catacombs. That is why we are looking forward to the People's Convention in Manchester on January 12, for it is the beginning of a process of independence of the British workers, leading toward a peoples' government and socialism. It brings the day closer, as the mother writes to her daughter, when "the peoples of the world will wake up and cooperate and rule themselves and not go on keeping the rich ones any longer." Real "aid to Britain" consists of helping the British people to take this path. Only this kind of aid to Britain will keep the American people out of war. And only by defeating reaction in every phase of American life can the American people achieve real solidarity and understanding with the peoples of the British Isles.

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You remember where you and I used to live. Well, opposite our house is a large hole where once were two tall houses. Round the corner in the square are three more similar ones. In the street which connects the two squares a slice has been taken off a whole row, and the opposite square has several houses down, too. M. lived in the one last mentioned; he was obliged to turn out at a moment's notice because of fire, and spent the next two days in his pajamas and borrowed overalls. A. and I are a little spasmodic about such contingencies. Some nights if it has been noisy and active before we go to bed, we get careful and leave some clothes on and the rest handy, and A. packs a suitcase full of her nurse's uniforms. We take a look round before we blow out the light and memorize where two scoops of the arms would be necessary to collect our belongings. Other nights we go all desperate and rash and say, "Damn it all, I will take off my clothes and go to bed comfortable." A bomb fell most uncomfortably near us the other night but did not go off. It was a curious sensation, that. We heard the whistle, felt the impact like a blunt instrument going right through us and the bed and the floor. We clutched the bed or nearest thing and waited for the explosion, and then it did not come. The house rocked like a little boat, and then settled down again, and we wondered where that one was, and if it would go off later.

You will have heard how the people of London occupied the Tubes. This was done in the teeth of the Board's notices to the effect that the Tubes could not be used as air raid shelters. A lot has been done to make the stations more hygienic and habitable since then, sometimes through the formation of shelter committees and some direct from the ministry of health and local authorities. There needs to be more action of this sort to get some of the good shelters opened in big city offices and places like that where they close them at night. Power to open such places is in the hands of the authorities, but they don't use it unless enough pressure is put on them. I must say that the Communist Party has put a lot of work into this demand for shelters.

You can be proud of your Londoners, the way they have faced up to danger. I wish I could tell you about the courage and calm, wise work of some of the Communists. It will be known some day.

Most people's life is nothing but work and shelter. A shelter-culture is coming out of this. Already certain Undergrounds are publishing their own newspapers. One of our friends who is on the editorial board of such a periodical told me the other day that she had received a request from the Imperial War Museum for copies of each issue. They are "noticed" in such papers as the *Times* and *Telegraph*. I think there is a good scope for group entertainment and other cultural activities and no doubt this will grow. People will not be able to get through our long, dark winter without something of this kind. I have been giving history talks to young people, so my time is fully occupied, and in spite of all the difficulties we do get something done in the way of education.

Yours, N.

North West London. Nov. 20, 1940.

DEAR ———: I am sending you this letter in hopes that it will reach you. Everything is in such a dreadful state and so uncertain. I wonder if you have heard what has been going on here. Last week the bombing was awful. We never get a night's rest. The guns go on overhead all night and we just lie and wonder if they are coming down on us. We cannot sleep in our shelter now, as owing to the heavy rains lately, the shelter is several feet under water. It is the same all over the district. Hundreds of houses are down and roads closed because of time bombs having fallen in the roads. So R. and I sleep on the Put-Me-Up in the front room downstairs. They say it is safer not to sleep upstairs. If anything does happen we can rush out to the cupboard under the stairs for protection. But it is a dreadful time.

The school you went to when you were in the Infants, and the Technical College have been hit badly, and of course the factories round here. We can only just go on hoping.

We are very well and have plenty of food, at least as much as we can afford. Everything is so dear; eating apples are 10d a pound, lemons 8d each; potatoes are cheaper, but not good. We make our ration of tea do all right although it is only 2 ounces each. Cups of tea and cigarettes are my only vices. I have not had an egg for eight weeks, and we are going to have cheese rationed now. You would laugh at the things we make up for our meals, but are none the worse for doing without luxuries. We just go on hoping, and if the worst comes we just hope it will be sudden.

The Board of Education has moved to Wales. That's where they have gone, so now it takes time to get any business done. The schools here are altering their times: they open at 9 o'clock and close at 3 o'clock with half an hour off at noon for lunch, so that the children and teachers can get home before the blackout.

It amuses me to see how much braver the women are than the men. They don't complain half as much as the men do. They get on with the next job to be done. At your cousin's house, old Mrs. H. sleeps in the back sitting room. Your uncle sleeps in the kitchen, and M. and her husband on the hall floor. Nobody, if he can help it, stays upstairs. I have applied for an increase in my old age pension. Ten shillings a week is really not enough to live on with prices what they are. But I have been refused because I live with a daughter.

Our Cooperative Women's Guild now meets in the afternoon. It is impossible for the women to go out at night. There are fewer now, since many women have been evacuated with their children; and of course, our Children's Circle has had to close down. I only hope the seed we sowed in their minds will develop at a later day. Surely it was not all wasted. I still send things to aid the Spanish refugees when I can get them. Our weather is miserable, torrents of rain and wind. The dampness everywhere is dreadful. We are only allowed ¾ cwt. of coal at a time and bad coal at that. There is no firewood to be got, only what we can pick up from the debris of the bombed houses round us. But we are not in despair. We go on hoping some day the peoples of the world will wake up and cooperate and rule themselves and not go on keeping the rich ones any longer.

MOTHER.

Return

This year is written in images of terror.
The heart assassinates us with visions
Even in the quietest hours. I have lain
Awake at night (haven't you?)
Crying—help me—from the
Brigand at the breast, the sudden air-raid assault
Of memory, the convulsive recollection
Of the agues of continents.

Yet certain is our return
Even now, in shipwreck,
To certainty, to man's homeland.
As the river-wide breast of salmon,
Or the herd's invisible net
Gathers the courage of each to return—
O, archipelago of desire
The birds will pass toward you; the flock contract;
The gulls press together and swing
Landward—and we return
Forever past the seawrack of this year.

MILLICENT LANG.

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The Corn Belt's Heart Is Sound

Simon W. Gerson gives his post-tour impressions of the Midwest. What they are saying in Iowa. Peace is the watchword among young and old.

AFTER seven weeks spent on a writing tour of Midwest America, what does it all add up to? Maybe just posing the question is a little forbidding, like that academic Teuton's three-volume *Introduction to the Love Life of the Flea.* But let it go this time. I touched about ten states, talked to scores of people, workers, farmers, filling station attendants, waitresses, reporters, union leaders, and rank and filers; listened to dozens of casual conversations; read papers in every town I visited. I won't swear that I can document every idea I got but it's my distinct feeling that I'm not doing any wishful thinking.

First of all, you ought to know that *the Midwest is not sold on America's entrance into the war.* It's grimly, stubbornly skeptical, with the tenacity of a deep-rooted tree in the face of a windstorm. To the Midwest, 1940 isn't 1916. There's sympathy for Britain, but nothing equal to the old get-the-Kaiser spirit. They're flatly opposed to sending our boys over and to extending loans. FDR won't get much support from the corn belt for revising the Johnson act.

POLITICS AND THE WAR

Of course, the insularity of the Midwest is probably the most important factor. But whatever it is, Midwesterners have no fear of swastika-tipped planes unloosing bombs tomorrow on the wheat fields. The President's time-tables weren't convincing. The calm sanity of the whole region was like a strong, fresh, cool breeze after the feverish william-allenwhited East. People just didn't feel the need of peacetime conscription, for example. You heard the argument everywhere that if Hitler couldn't cross twenty miles of English Channel to conquer Britain, how the hell was he going to cross 3,000 miles of Atlantic and knock us over? So little is the fear of invasion in the Midwestern mind that not even the impressionable kids think of it. One Iowa high school teacher told me the amazing story of a debate she organized among her 17-year-old youngsters on the presidential race the day before elections. There was a spirited debate—revolving completely about corn and hog prices. Not a youngster mentioned foreign affairs or the war, an unthinkable omission under the same circumstances in the East. The answer is, of course, that their elders are not worried about any invasion; their only worry is—will that fellow in Washington get us in the mess?

I said above that I wouldn't document but I think it's useful to recall that Iowa, whose farm income this year was relatively good, went to Willkie despite the fact that it went for Roosevelt in '32 and '36. Fear of war and the third term was the answer to that one. In Illinois, the noisy Republican C. Wayland Brooks was elected to the Senate after a tub-thumping campaign in every county against conscription and intervention. Mr. Brooks had to beat his fellow Republican on Frank Knox's newspaper, the Chicago *Daily News,* in order to win. The *Daily News* editorially urged its readers to vote for Willkie and against Brooks because Brooks wouldn't go along with the pro-war current. Brooks, I hasten to add, is no working-class sweetheart. He's a pet of Col. Frank McCormick's Chicago *Tribune,* America's leading appeasement sheet, and will undoubtedly represent in Congress the viewpoint of the Kennedy-Hoover-Lindbergh-McCormick crowd. But what is significant is that he won despite the fact that Roosevelt carried the state.

Any number of reasons might be adduced for Midwestern coldness to the war. I don't pretend to give them in order of importance, but here are a few major reasons I gathered: (1) This war is none of our business; no skin off our shins no matter who wins or loses. (2) We got stung last time saving the world for democracy—why get bit this time? (3) What do we stand to gain?

Nor did I discover any mass enthusiasm for the draft. Young men are complying with the terms of the law but nobody is breaking down doors to get conscripted. Every young fellow I talked to seemed to be anxious to be deferred. I heard stories that unemployed young men were tickled at the idea of a year in the army. If there were any fellows laughing themselves to death over the idea, they never let it be known widely.

WAR INDUSTRY WORKERS

One other fundamental impression: the workers in the war industries are not falling for the "sacrifice" hooey. The contrast of huge profits on one side and unemployment and poverty on the other is very sharp this time. The workers see all those profits and, by God, they're going to get a piece of 'em in the shape of higher wages. The only way the "sacrifice" gag can be put over is by a combination of governmental terror and treachery of the Hillman labor-leader type. But the workers will fight back with a vigor that will astound old-timers. *They see no moral or economic reason for "sacrifice,"* and Knudsen is the last man in the world to convince them otherwise.

Gropper

Talking of defense, there is, of course, apparent to even the most casual observer something of a war boom in virtually every large basic industrial center. But with it there's growing apprehension: after the war boom, what? People of all types, politicians, conservative union leaders, hotel keepers—all are afraid of the big letdown. And when it comes this time! The post-war years of the twenties will seem like a picnic.

MIDWESTERN YOUTH

I got another impression, one even less susceptible to documentation but nevertheless very firm in my own mind, and that is of a certain demoralization among younger people. The youngsters drink more than they did ten years ago, seem to be freer sexually, in their language and habits. That perhaps is explained by the ten years of economic crisis and the fact that some of these youngsters have grown up into a life of unemployment. But I sense something else, too. There's a certain amount of moral decay seeping down from our upper crust, but that, too, doesn't explain everything. Perhaps it is that they instinctively feel the imminence of war, chaos, and instability. The old values are gone. Why not get as much fun as one can, here and now? It's not a new phenomenon, of course, and sociologists will tell you that it's common just before, during, and after a war period. The White House, quick to tell thoughtful youngsters that their resolutions are mere "twaddle," might do well to study this trend.

Elders are, of course, shocked, and Mrs. Grundy continues to give battle against sin in heroic but hopeless fashion throughout the Bible Belt. One debate raging while I was in Iowa was whether co-educational dancing should be permitted in high school gymnasiums.

The most important thing for Easterners to understand in gauging the Midwest is to realize that new political and social expression is often given through confused forms. Thus, for example, the protest against the Roosevelt war policies was manifested in votes for Willkie, despite the fact that he represented essentially the same policies. This is also true of the election to Congress of isolationists, even though many of them are reactionaries. But, irrespective of the form in which this peace feeling expresses itself, it's there. America's great Midwestern heart is sound.

SIMON W. GERSON.

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Return of a Hero

Rodolfo Ghioldi, the Argentine people's leader, comes home from the tortures of a Brazilian dungeon. Why they came from all over the land to welcome him.

Buenos Aires.

THOUSANDS of men, women, and children crowded the harbor of Buenos Aires, waiting for the arrival of *Pedro II,* the steamship bringing Rodolfo Ghioldi back to Argentine. The port authorities, the police, the steamship company officials, as well as the press, had tried to conceal the exact hour of the landing. Only at the last minute did the word go round that the boat would not dock until the early hours of the following morning. At sunrise, on October 28, from the furthest sections of the great city of Buenos Aires, thousands of workers made their way to the waterfront. Small boats, manned by sympathetic seamen, waited in the outer harbor for the first sign of *Pedro II,* intending to bring the news back to the men and women at the shore. Several hours passed in anxious expectation; almost the whole morning, and half the afternoon, until at 3 PM, the ship was sighted. As it drew closer a lean figure could be discerned, virtually a specter, his hair falling aside from the middle of a broad forehead, his eyes glistening. With fist closed in the air, he greeted those who waited for him.

Workers past fifty years of age, hands calloused and bodies tortured by years of slavery in the shops, broke down in tears. Women hugged each other, children raced along the water's edge with shouts and laughter. This is how the people of Argentine welcomed home Rodolfo Ghioldi. From the whole country, from Ushuaia in Patagonia to la Quiaca in the Plateau, from Mendoza at the foot of the Andes to Puerto Aguirre in the heart of the jungle, letters and telegrams and even delegations continued to arrive, literally pouring out their congratulations upon Ghioldi's arrival.

Why all this popular rejoicing? Who is this man, and what does he stand for in the eyes of the Argentine people?

EARLY DAYS

Rodolfo Ghioldi was born into an old Socialist family in 1899. His grandfather, and then his father were among the founders of Argentine socialism. Rodolfo, the oldest son, quite naturally enlisted in his earliest teens in the working-class movement, and during the 1916-17 days took a leading role in the Socialist Youth Front, the organized protest of the Argentine youth against the first world war. As elsewhere, the bureaucrats in charge of the Socialist Party concealed the Zimmerwald Manifesto from the youth: Ghioldi was among those who broke through this conspiracy, and championed the cause of international solidarity in the Zimmerwald spirit.

In April 1918, the extraordinary Congress of the Argentine Socialist Party, the famous "La Verdi" Congress, debated which path the workers of Argentine should take. Without wavering, young Ghioldi, then eighteen years old, ranged himself against the social-patriots. In January 1918, he was one of the founders of the International Socialist Party, as it was called, which supported the Bolshevik Revolution. It was this party which later became the Communist Party of Argentine. Ghioldi was one of the first Latin-American delegates to arrive at the Third Congress of the Third International, where he met Lenin.

The early twenties were years of great social upheavals in Argentine: a powerful movement for the reform of public education swept the country, a number of important strikes, among them the strike on the railroads which lasted a full month. Those were the years in which Ghioldi matured, and during the dictatorship of Generals Uriburu and Justo, Ghioldi directed the activities of the illegal Communist organization.

FLED TO BRAZIL

At the beginning of 1935 he was forced to flee his homeland. That is how he came to Brazil, where he soon associated himself with the Brazilian revolutionary movement. He was arrested together with Luiz Carlos Prestes, the "Knight of Hope," and that brave American Victor Barron, who was later assassinated by the police. Ghioldi's trial lasted a full year, during which he was brutally tortured. "Of my thirty months in Brazil," says Ghioldi, twenty of them were spent in jail. And in those jails I met citizens of Brazil in all walks of life and of various political beliefs. From them, I have learned to admire the Brazilian people, and understand their struggle for national freedom. I feel myself intimately linked with them through bonds of mutual solidarity. As an Argentine Communist, and proud to be one, I am nevertheless a citizen of the entire Latin-American continent, which I want to see liberated from imperialist oppression, from the threat of fascism, from economic and cultural backwardness."

The Brazilian military tribunal sentenced him to four years and four months confinement. He was shipped to the barren, rocky island of Fernando de Noronha, off the Atlantic coast, where he was detained for many months after the sentence expired. And it was only the great protest in Argentine that compelled Getulio Vargas to set him free.

Ghioldi reminds us, here in Buenos Aires, of Henri Barbusse in his last years. Before his imprisonment, he was a robust, healthy man. He returns to us pale and thin—his upper teeth shattered by the blows of a Brazilian gendarme—which gives him even more of a gaunt appearance. He cannot stomach food, although he needs nourishment badly. But his appearances in Argentine command the following of thousands of workers. All the trade union locals have asked to see him simultaneously. These are dark and grave moments, when world imperialism is engaged in a terrible conflict, in which Argentine has become simply a pawn. The fascists in our country are trying to oust their rival imperialists from the River Plate region, while the United States demands naval bases of us—a mortal blow at our national sovereignty. All the more need, then, for the presence of Ghioldi among us.

His courage is unflinching and his spirits are high. When he first set his foot again on Argentine soil, he declared without hesitation: "I have come back to work for the freedom of Luiz Carlos Prestes, for the freedom and peace of the American nations."

RICARDO SETARO.

Rodolfo Ghioldi

No Union-Busting

"NINETEEN office employees of the Gluckin Corp., brassiere and girdle manufacturers, went on strike November 14, demanding an 'uplift' in wages because the company kept them 'flat-busted,' following the employer's threat to discharge half of the office staff in retaliation for their union membership."—*From the "Office and Professional News," official organ of the United Office and Professional Workers of America (CIO).*

★

"PROF. BERNHARD OSTROLENK, of the School of Business and Civic Administration at City College, concluded from extensive research today that 'poverty in the United States is psychic. Actually, people have more goods and services than at any time before,' he said. 'They merely imagine they are poorer.'"—*From the Detroit "News," Dec. 9, 1940.*

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HORRORSCOPE

for Every Month in the Year

THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

1941

A Survey of Astrological Indications ✶✶✶ **BASED ON THE SUN'S POSITION**

Rodney

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That Firebrand Chat

FDR tries to dissolve the people's suspicions. Our answer and our program for defending America. An editorial.

THE President's fireside chat last Sunday evening leaves no doubt about his wishes for the New Year. It will not be a Happy New Year at all. And next Christmas is likely to be even less merry than the Christmas which has passed.

The President's speech was a vigorous polemic with those sections of the American ruling class who hesitate to make a binding commitment to the British empire. They are fearful that the United States may be left holding the bag. They are fearful that by such a commitment, American imperialism may not be able to dominate the outcome of this war and prevent the advance of socialism in war-torn Europe. Judging from this speech, Mr. Roosevelt has great confidence in his ability to use England successfully against Germany, to use China against Japan, to save capitalism in Europe and Asia, and keep the American people in hand all at the same time.

But the fireside chat was much more than that. On the one hand, Mr. Roosevelt presents us with a *fait accompli,* for he leaves no doubt that he intends to pursue his policies no matter how other people feel. On the other hand, he deems it necessary to restate his whole case, to summarize much of what we have heard before. Evidently the President realizes acutely that most Americans have not been sold on his policies at all. They are extremely reluctant to do his bidding. They suspect that in the name of defense all things worthy of defense are being destroyed. They suspect that in the name of keeping war from our shores, he is forcing us into a war far from our shores, no less a war because it is not declared, no less a war because troops have not been sent across—as yet.

It can be argued, as many people have, that the President is again exaggerating the possibility of invasion from abroad. And the fact is even Colonel Knox, the Secretary of the Navy, has several times admitted that the possibility of invasion by air or sea has been overstated. It is possible to ask whether the rulers of Great Britain will not knife us in the back should Hitler offer a better bargain this spring than he has offered thus far.

But the full answer to Mr. Roosevelt lies on much larger ground. It is a ground which the American working class must insist upon, ground on which the President and all he stands for become highly vulnerable.

Consider, for example, Mr. Roosevelt's reference to the Far East. He linked China's fight with Britain's and tried to cash in on popular support for China in order to undermine popular suspicion of Britain. Yet the fact stares us in the face that China's fight has been made possible only by the support of the Soviet Union, whereas Japan's aggression has been made possible by the United States. What is worse—while the President rails against the danger in the Pacific—his government still permits the shipment of every kind of war material to Japan. His undersecretaries are still licensing an increasing volume of trade with Japan. And the men who own the big industries—great sacrificers that they are—are profiting every day by this hypocrisy. But if we are in danger from the tripartite pact of which Japan is a member, why does the President fail to say one encouraging word for the improvement of relations with that great Pacific power, the Soviet Union? Why does he permit his class hatred for socialism to stand in the way of the people's interest in the victory of China by means of cooperation with the USSR?

Or consider Mr. Roosevelt's very casual references to Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Brazil. Is it not obvious that through this sonorous speech, he was actually warning Ireland to yield her neutrality to England's demand? And was not the reference to a possible German occupation of Italy merely a part of Churchill's diplomacy which aspires to a British occupation of Italy no different from the British occupation of Greece?

The President waxes very sarcastic about Hitler's pretense of "protecting Belgium from the British." Yet his own references to the Azores islands are just as cynical, and his mention of Brazil is merely another way of saying that the United States stands ready to occupy both the Azores and Brazil—on the same pretext that served Germany with Belgium—the pretext of self-defense!

"As planes and ships and guns and shells are produced," says the President, "your government, with its defense experts, can then determine how best to use them to defend this hemisphere" . . . . these are words that will send a shiver up the spines of 120,000,000 Americans to the south of us. This is a request for a free hand in foreign policy. And it does not exclude the possibility that these "planes and ships and guns and shells" might even be turned against the British people or even the people of the United States.

If we follow the President's policies to their logical conclusion, we reach a dead end. For when he warns us that unless his course is followed, "we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of war economy," this is truly a generous choice! What else but a "militaristic power" and a "war economy" is Mr. Roosevelt making of us today?

But why do we reach this dead end? Why these ignoble choices? Only because what the American people are being forced to defend is the *system of imperialism,* the way of life of a small handful of people who have monopolized our resources and dominate our life, a small fraction of the population which cannot maintain itself against a powerful rival, except by having the rest of us fight its war.

But these are the very men who have undermined our democracy these last ten years. They were the ones who got us into the last war, and we got only death and frustration out of it. These men are the real bottlenecks to national progress—they are the ones who have not yet rehired the 10,000,000 unemployed. They are the budget-cutters, the book-censors, the fountainhead of everything reactionary in American life. NEW MASSES believes in defending the American people, in defending American soil. We desire the destruction of fascism abroad, as well as at home. But we do not believe in becoming the pawns of our worst enemies, the pawns of the same men who built and coddled German fascism, have continued to coddle Japanese fascism, and are today so anxious to reach for the hand of a "gentlemanly" Italian fascism as well.

The President skips lightly over the Soviet Union, although he dares not repeat the libel that it is part of the Axis alliance. But what have we Americans to learn from the USSR? It is a simple lesson—*there* is a government which does not appease Hitler, and yet insists on staying out of war.

Why can the Soviet peoples do what we Americans don't seem able to do? Because the Soviet Union is strong with the strength of men and women who own their own resources, who govern themselves, who have abolished classes that insist upon fighting for profits, for markets, and strategic positions against imperialist rivals. And that is also why the USSR can trade with both sides in this war without becoming involved on either side. The American people could also be strong, and NEW MASSES favors that. They also might have to sacrifice, as indeed the Russian people did. But only if that sacrifice were going to bring about the reinvigoration of democracy, and advance toward the people's control of their destiny.

The President speaks of "the government" as "determined to protect the rights of the workers"; and follows this pledge with the ominous warning that the "nation expects our defense industries to continue operation without strikes or lockouts." These few phrases contain the most sinister explosives against the standards of the American labor movement won by hard fight these last years. Most insidious of all, however, is the myth which is implicit in these words—the myth that government stands above classes, that the government, as it is now constituted, represents the nation. Here lies the characteristic and deadly service of all the so-called liberals (whether of humble or aristocratic origin) who become the strategists of imperialism. By making it appear that the government stands above classes, Mr. Roosevelt conceals the fact that government is the agency and instrument of the ruling class. He

(Continued on next page)

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BARBARA GILES.

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★

conceals the fact that government personifies the interest of big business, is ridden through with the men who represent big business, and furthers the general interests and larger strategy of big business.

This theory of the government's "neutrality" is the most dangerous enemy of the labor movement today. It is precisely the theory by which the German Social-Democratic leaders undermined the organizations of the German workers and prepared the way to fascism. And fascism also proclaims its "classless" character, its "national unity." This is the theory by which the British labor leaders have buffaloed the workingmen of Britain for two generations, have muffed each chance to destroy their own imperialism. *This theory is a lie*—the biggest lie of them all. And the American people will pay even more dearly than they did in the last war for believing it.

In truth, these times call for sacrifice, for mobilization, for preparedness. The people must sacrifice to maintain their organizations, must mobilize to defend their liberties, must prepare to crystallize from amongst themselves a third party of the people. This alone can keep war from our shores. Only this kind of mobilization will encourage the British people to do likewise, as they have already begun in their People's Convention. Only this guarantees collaboration with the peoples of Europe, the Soviet Union, and Asia in the reconstruction of a truly democratic world.

A Peep at War Aims

THE British government has never stated its war aims beyond the vaguest generalities. We have therefore been justified in assuming that Britain's rulers are fighting for objectives they dare not define for the British or the American people. In a sense, the appointment of Lord Halifax as ambassador to the United States was a revelation of the real war aims. There are evidently such hard, material questions of imperialist position involved in the current haggling between London and Washington that Britain trusts only a most reliable representative like Halifax for the job. It is noteworthy that Halifax' appointment has received the frostiest reception in the United States. The big capitalist press hems and haws with apologies for the Munichman's record. They know too well how badly his name smells. And their rhetoric about his devoutness and conversion to the democratic way is more disgusting than convincing. The liberal weeklies, with their unlimited pretense of political virginity, are again shocked at the hard facts of life. They wring their hands at the sight of British imperialism so naked. But they are so far committed to this war that they can no longer draw the obvious conclusions from their own editorials.

Churchill's broadcast to Italy several days ago was even more shameless. It was a revelation of the kind of minds, the cynical strategy, the real objectives of the men who rule England. Here was an occasion to rouse the oppressed peoples behind the fascist lines, precisely what Harold Laski has been chattering about so pathetically. And yet, what did Churchill say? He addressed himself to the Italian upper classes. He implored them to replace "one man," Mussolini, after which everything would be hunky dory between British and Italian imperialism. In the same week that British officers were reported marshaling Ethiopian troops for an attack on the Italian empire in east Africa, Churchill insults the Ethiopian people by virtually granting Italy's case against Ethiopia. *Churchill said not one word about the system of fascism* —its degradation of living standards, its assault on the liberties, the organizations, the culture of the Italian people. He said nothing about the democratic new order which the peoples of Europe are supposed to expect after British deliverance. And instead of appealing to the ideals of international brotherhood, he inflamed every chauvinist passion against the Germans as a people. Fascism is clearly okay with Churchill, if it would only cooperate with the British Tories. Thus Churchill smashes another myth that his assumption of power last May meant a new era in Britain. For it was also Chamberlain's favorite lament that not Hitler's system, but Hitler's refusal to be a gentleman was the root of the war.

Churchill offered to buy off the Italian upper classes. His speech is therefore a measure of the real differences which are rending the Italian ruling class. But this speech, as we have often noted editorially, is only one phase of a diplomatic offensive which London and Washington both are now carrying on in Italy, France, and Spain. Whether the game succeeds or not, it exposes the high "democratic" pretense of the men who are playing it.

The Reuther Plan

THE press this past week vigorously debated the provisions of the so-called Reuther plan, a program that was placed before the President to produce 500 fighting planes a day. The proposals, sponsored by the leadership of the United Auto Workers, would rationalize the automobile industry, equip it to build the lighter forms of war aircraft. A survey of the Detroit area has been proposed to ascertain the type of motor or aircraft parts each plant could manufacture. Allotment of the various parts of a fighter plane to various plants for production on mass basis, would follow.

We cannot be satisfied with technical considerations alone. The main question is, 500 planes a day for what? The American people must never lose sight of one fundamental point: a government driving toward imperialistic expansion will not use these arms for defensive purposes. They will be used for aggression. Once this idea is clear, the Reuther plan can be seen in its proper perspective. It carries no boon to the people. On the contrary it tends to tie labor to the chariot of war. Raymond Clapper, Scripps-Howard columnist, was quick to see this. This plan cheers him for "its morale value because it suggests that the CIO is not holding back" from the "defense effort." Mr. Clapper speaks for all those who fret at the fact that the CIO has gone on record against involvement in the war and he sees this plan as a lever to pry labor into full support of the warmakers' program.

So far President Roosevelt has not committed himself, aside from his polite declaration that he will "study" the proposition. He certainly has no objections to labor leaders offering themselves as pushers on the belt of his imperialist program. But the plan carries with it certain risks, and the President is quick to realize them. It may offend some of the big-time industrialists: the airplane manufacturers, for example, who don't want any poaching on their preserves. Auto magnates are not too happy about the project for it may throw a monkey wrench in their plans to get more government-backed motor and chassis plants. Mr. Knudsen's studied reserve may be indicative of his bosses' displeasure.

Balkan Whispering Gallery

ALTHOUGH most reports are unreliable, it seems a sure bet that Germany has shipped several more divisions into Rumania. Several hundred Nazi technicians are reported working in the oil fields, which are under German guards. Reports from Budapest say that most of the German troops are marshaled along the frontier of the Soviet Moldavian republic. From which the ever hopeful capitalist press draws the conclusion of a break in Soviet-German relations, if not now, then in the spring. Unconfirmed stories also describe the collapse of a commission for the control of Danube river traffic, in which Soviet and Axis representatives are supposed to have violently disagreed. Naturally, we take this with a barrel of salt. For when the war is viewed as a whole, it seems unlikely that Germany should now reverse its policy of neutrality toward the USSR. There may be technical difficulties, as there have been in the past, in Soviet-German relations. But these are negotiable under the provisions of the nonaggression pact. The more obvious meaning of these stories in the Balkans involves different matters. It is no secret that the whole social fabric in Rumania is decomposing. All social relations in the Balkans are under great stress because of the war. It is not surprising, therefore, that Germany should be

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impelled to consolidate her control over Rumania, or even to prepare to hold the lid on the rest of the Balkans. The interesting questions revolve around the extent of German troop movements into Italy; second, the probability of large scale German assistance to Italy in Greece; third, the popular reaction to all this in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. These are questions which the New Year may answer.

Mr. Hillman Squeaks

SIDNEY HILLMAN said nothing when the War Department awarded Henry Ford defense contracts for $122,323,020. John L. Lewis exposed this double deal. Labor flooded Washington with angry protests. Finally Mr. Hillman was forced to peep but in private. He complained to the War Department but retreated when the Army insisted that only Henry Ford could produce the necessary airplane engines and magnesium castings. Yielding to trade union pressure, he did utter a public complaint against another order of 1,500 light reconnaissance motor cars valued at $1,387,500. Any manufacturer could have made these cars, he said. Why give it to a violator of the labor laws?

But now it appears that any manufacturer could also have made the airplane engines and magnesium castings. Ford has no plant capacity for such production; in fact, the War Department has just signed an emergency facilities contract for $21,965,420.43. Henry will advance this sum for the building of two new Dearborn factories which will produce the engines and castings. The government will pay him back over a period of five years, after which he may purchase the plants out of his profits or turn the useless buildings and machines back to the government. Nice old government.

United Auto Workers of the CIO who know their Ford are now engaged in a vitally important organizing drive in the vast flivver plants. They know that only a trade union can compel Ford observance of the Wagner act. They also know that no friend of Henry Ford can be a friend of theirs. And it will take a great deal to convince them that labor's interest can be safeguarded by publicity releases from Sidney Hillman's office.

Arnold's Big Baton

AS THE deadline of January 1 neared in the radio music war, a familiar figure stepped into the picture. It was none other than Thurman Arnold, Mr. Roosevelt's assistant attorney general in charge of anti-trust law violations, who announced that he will authorize criminal proceedings in United States District Court in Milwaukee against the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and also against their antagonists, NBC and CBS, and the chains' stooge publishing outlet, Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI). Because ASCAP numbers among its members nearly all American songwriters and composers, the Arnold attack may be broadly compared to his previous onslaughts against trade unions. Inclusion of the chains in the announced prosecution is called a smoke screen intended to conceal the fact that Arnold had ordered ASCAP to sign a capitulatory consent decree in its current contract dispute. When ASCAP refused, the Department of Justice stepped in.

ASCAP officials contend that the networks are restraining trade by banning its music from the air and therefore should logically be the object of prosecution. They call the filing of the suit in Wisconsin, where state officials have shown anti-ASCAP bias, a handicap to their defense. In other words, the songwriters find themselves lined up against the same wall with the furriers, teamsters, electricians, and other workers who have felt Thurman Arnold's misuse of the Sherman act and of the government's powers. In principle, the Arnold action is directed against the free association of creative artists; it takes no cognizance of their right to protect their copyrights and royalties. And it overlooks the issue of monopoly control of the air waves, with its consequent censorship not only of music but of news and opinion.

Teachers On Trial

THE enemies of free education in New York are now calling upon God to give them a hand. Former Magistrate Joseph Goldstein, appearing in court as representative of "taxpayers" who seek the dismissal of six New York college teachers "accused of Communist affiliation" said, "With the help of God and the courts we may be able to nip this subversive movement in the bud." Mr. Goldstein's definition of "subversive movements" approximates that of Mr. Dies.

Corporation Counsel William C. Chanler did his bit for the Rapp-Coudert witch hunters at the same time. He said that the Board of Higher Education would dismiss teachers who are "proven" to be Communists. Osmond K. Fraenkel, who appeared on behalf of the six teachers, made the point that there is no New York law that holds the views of the Communist Party as subversive or that requires dismissal of civil service employees if they are Communists.

This trial is the latest stage in the drive of New York reactionaries to scuttle free education. Herbert Witt put it well last week. The national executive secretary of the American Student Union told 350 delegates at the opening session of his organization's convention that the Rapp-Coudert committee served a double function: it supplied the basis for a general legislative assault on academic liberty within the schools, and it laid a basis for a general assault on the educational budget. Progressives realize this well. The Greater New York Industrial Council of the CIO, the National Lawyers Guild, the New York College Teachers Union, and others sent representatives to Justice Dineen's courtroom when the case of the six teachers was opened. All demanded the right to intervene on behalf of the defendants.

The Student Conferences

THE young don't want to go first. In fact, they don't want to go at all. And not all the panic-mongering of President Roosevelt can persuade them that the British empire is the hope of the world. These elementary truisms were confirmed in emphatic fashion over the weekend at two student conferences held under widely divergent auspices. The American Student Union, at its sixth national convention in New York City, pulled no punches. It unanimously adopted a resolution branding the war in Europe as an imperialist war, opposing loans and credits to Britain in any form, as well as the shipment of war materials to Japan, and urging "full economic and diplomatic aid to China," "improvement in relations between the United States and the USSR and the full and unconditional recognition of the economic and political independence of the Latin American countries." The convention also struck out boldly on domestic issues, demanding passage of the American Youth Act, the relief bill, and the conscription repeal measure sponsored by Representative Marcantonio; it called for "full political and social equality" for Negroes, opposed amendment of the National Labor Relations Act, and urged the ending of "the FBI's attacks on peace and labor organizations." It also adopted a "Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities."

All of which was to have been expected from an organization like the ASU. But the real surprise was the conference in New Brunswick, N. J., sponsored by the International Student Service and the National Student Federation. In last week's NEW MASSES Bruce Minton told the story of how the Roosevelt administration, acting through Joseph P. Lash and a handful of other faithful stooges, had engineered this conference for the purpose of launching a dual student movement and furthering compulsory work camps for young men and women. The organizers of the conference, which was chaperoned by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and keynoted by a message from the President, showed their colors at the start when they rejected the credentials of nearly one hundred delegates in an effort to purge the gathering of all genuinely progressive students. But even this was insufficient to enable the sponsors to achieve their chief political objective: stampede the conference into supporting the administration's aid-to-Britain program. So great was the opposition that plans to introduce a resolution on this question had to be abandoned. However, two petitions expressing the two opposing views were informally circulated among the delegates; result: seventy-one against the aid-to-Britain program, forty-seven for. Nor did the sponsors succeed in launching a new movement; they had to content themselves with a small unrepresentative "league" which is to serve as "the basis for a new movement in the colleges." Maybe. In our next issue we will have more to say on this question.

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Readers' Forum

Mr. Hicks Against Himself

To New Masses: In browsing through the December issue of *Soviet Russia Today* I came across an article by Corliss Lamont which discusses John Reed and other matters. In the course of the article, Mr. Lamont tells the story of a debate he had with Granville Hicks at Smith College. In the event that some of New Masses' readers may have overlooked this account, I'm copying it and sending it on to you to reprint.

"The other day I went up to Northampton, Mass., home of Smith College, to take part with Hicks in a two-man symposium on 'The Future of the Left' before the Progressive Club Forum. The evening gradually turned into something of a debate on the subject of the Soviet Union. Among a number of dazzling flights into the fanciful, Mr. Hicks took the astonishing position that it is impossible to obtain reliable facts about the internal situation in the USSR, that a citation from Freda Utley automatically cancels out one by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and that therefore the only thing you *can* be sure of is the terrible foreign policy of the Soviet government.

"I responded to this by asking whether we couldn't settle the controversy between the Webbs and Miss Utley by bringing in a third authority on the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union, namely, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Granville Hicks, who on pages 143-146 of *I Like America,* published in 1938, states that the achievements and progress of the Soviet people have been immense and remarkable. For some reason the audience, about half of which was composed of Smith girls, thought this was pretty funny and laughed so hard that I couldn't help laughing myself. Then I added: 'You see, I just happened to read this passage by chance on the way up in the train.' That brought another roar of laughter. Meantime Mr. Hicks cracked nary a smile and, in spite of all my efforts to be amusing, looked glum as could be throughout the meeting.

"Becoming a bit more serious, I proceeded to ask Hicks please to explain why he and certain other writers had constantly lauded the great accomplishments of the Soviet Union right up through the middle of August 1939, and then by September 1, following the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, had suddenly decided that all these accomplishments never existed, that Soviet socialism was a total failure and that the entire 170 million people of the USSR were little better than barbarians. 'How come?' I said. Mr. Hicks was not able to give me even a half-way satisfactory answer to this question and in my humble opinion he never will be able to do so.

"Well, I had a lot of fun that evening. And at the end, after giving Hicks the benefit of every doubt and allowing my natural modesty full play, I was finally forced to concede myself the victory in my work-out with the sage of Grafton, New York."

By the way, according to press reports which I have seen, Hr. Hicks has come out for all aid to Britain. He also advocates direct American intervention should Mr. Churchill seem to be losing his battle with Mr. Hitler. I wonder whether Hicks has burned his copy of his biography of John Reed. Certainly it should haunt him for the rest of his days. Reed stood for everything which Hicks has repudiated—honesty, progress, peace, and a firm belief in the future of the common people.

Edna Lescaut.

Philadelphia, Pa.

We Stand Corrected

To New Masses: J. T. Carson is the better man for having rushed off his criticism of Mr. Webb's "It's Happened in Washington." (New Masses, November 19.) I reacted much more deeply to the Webb article than did Mr. Carson (if I am to judge by the tenor of his letter), but permitted the grass to grow under my feet while he took up the cudgels in defense of the nation's capital. I think, however, there is much more to be added to the Carson letter if the erroneous impression left by this article is to be corrected.

We can all agree that the "reactionary-jitters" do exist in Washington. But readers of New Masses know that in those parts of the United States where the terror has been greatest, the advanced section of humanity, in the forefront of the struggle against reaction, has not furled its banners and slunk away. Is Washington D. C. the exception? I was one of those who felt the sub-human brutality of the Washington police at that unforgettable Sunrise Service for Peace. It was my baptism in the meaning of terror and intimidation. One who has not had such a baptism can hardly grasp its full significance.

Did Washington stop holding mass meetings for peace after that? Such meetings followed in quick succession. Only a few weeks ago Theodore Dreiser addressed an open air peace rally. It was a raw, cold night and over 700 people, Negro and white, stood their ground for two solid hours. Of that mass many had had personal experience with the Sunrise Service. To the very end of the Dreiser meeting (which went off quite peacefully) many felt that at any moment there would be a repetition of police lawlessness or provocation by stooges. Yet there we stood in Lafayette Park, backed up by determination and a very effective amplifier.

Not all of the people's struggles in Washington take place with the fireworks that make a Roman holiday for journalists. Progressive men and women go about their small, daily tasks of leading the fight against the burdens which the war-bent administration seeks to impose on the people. These tasks taken separately do not make exciting news copy, but add it up and you have a significant contribution to the progressive forces of the United States.

Catherine Lawrence.

Washington, D. C.

The Duchy of David Windsor

To New Masses: I have been spending a vacation in Nassau, that tiny outpost of the British empire where David Edward Windsor, former king-emperor, has been installed as governor. As a typical example of British colonial rule, and because of their strategic location at the gateway to Central America, the Bahamas assume an importance out of relation to their size.

The island of New Providence, whose capital is Nassau, is populated predominantly by Negroes who formerly owned the land which was bought for a song by white speculators. The latter reaped a golden harvest to build a white man's paradise. Today these white men govern the island in the name of the crown. The Negroes live under a theoretically democratic government, but the island administration has established a form of Jim Crowism as complete as our own southern variety. Behind Nassau's facade of luxurious homes there's another town seldom seen by the tourists. This is a shanty town—decrepit huts lining narrow, unpaved streets, the majority without sanitary or other conveniences. Quarters are cramped in a climate which demands room and air. Dirt and squalor, disease and hunger—these make up the real Nassau.

What pleases the English and American residents, is that labor is cheap. $2.00 to $3.50 per week is considered a generous wage. You can get a couple, man and wife, to run your home for $3.00 weekly, a cook who will average ten hours a day for $2 to $4. Apparently giving cognizance to the low standard of living in the Bahamas, the government in 1937 fixed, by Order of Council, minimum wages for unskilled workers. In the tomato industry (a principal source of export) minimum, and therefore average, wages for laborers were set at 30 cents to 60 cents per day. In the building trades, the rate is 80 cents per day for males. These figures are from the *Bahamas Blue Book for 1938* and must be considered in relation to living costs which have always been high, are higher today. Skilled workers, of whom there are few, get from $1.20 to $2.00 per day. Painters and plumbers receive the former figure, carpenters the latter.

Some hope for better conditions has been put in the Duke of Windsor, but as one of the natives expressed it, "He hasn't done anything yet." At the opening of the Legislative Council this Fall, the Duke in a prepared address, reviewed among other things the increase in unemployment. With respect to unemployment, his sole recommendation was that an advisory committee be set up to study the matter and be ready to act when the need arose.

The death rate, by the way, is 126.2 per 1,000 live births, a figure which is double that of the US. There's a lack of proper medical and dental care.

My own conclusion about Nassau is that without the British or any other ruling group to hold them down, the Negroes could make a significant contribution to the culture and well being of the Bahamas.

C. B.

Nassau, Bahamas.

More About Coudert

To New Masses: Here is an interesting footnote to one phase of Simon W. Gerson's piece, "The Coudert School for Slander" (December 17). Gerson relates that Coudert's law firm has reactionary French connections. The fact is that this law firm, Coudert Bros., of which Frederic R. Coudert, Sr., is a partner, also has as a partner one Paul Fuller, Jr. Now Fuller has for a number of years been secretary and director of Coty Inc. and its affiliate, Coty International Corp. The late Francois Coty, head of the Coty perfumery enterprises, was a multi-millionaire and founder of the "politically fascist" newspaper, *L'Ami du peuple.* More, Coty was, according to R. Palme Dutt, one of those who early subsidized the Croix de Feu. Later Coty organized his own fascist group, Solidarite Francais, which, John Gunther reported, was more to the right than the Croix de Feu!

These facts make Gerson's reference to Coudert's reactionary French connections even more pointed.

Hy Kravif.

New York City.

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Is Poetry Dead?

Jacques Roumain, the distinguished Haitian writer, discusses poetry as a mirror of the times. Why Archibald MacLeish became "the repenting Magdalene of liberalism."

AN INQUIRY into the fate of poetry is imperative. Poetry is a part of the ideological system whose manifold reflections, be they psychology, art, morals, philosophy, or any other manifestation of the human mind, express a concrete historical reality.

Poetry is not a pure idealistic distillation, a sort of magical incantation: it reflects that which in common language one calls an epoch; that is to say, the dialectical complexity of social relations, of contradictions and antagonisms of the political and economic structure of a society at a definite historical period. Hence, poetry is a testimony and one of the elements of analysis of this society. With some ambition I could have called these remarks: "From Mallarme to Mayakovsky." What distinguishes the great French poet from the Russian genius seems to me singularly to underline and illustrate my point. Mallarme is the product of an epoch when the progressive curve of capitalism has already reached its dead climax, when bourgeois society has entered its declining stage, at which, to the destruction of the productive forces, it adds the negation of cultural values.

If the writer does not retain from this process of agony anything but the negative aspect, if he does not grasp in the death of an obsolete social organism its replacement by another of a higher quality, his troubled disorder may translate itself into an evasion of reality susceptible of acquiring the most varied forms.

> *Je fuis et je m'accroche à toutes les croisées*
> *d'ou on tourne le dos à la vie*
> I escape and hold on to all the windows
> from which one turns the back to life

sings Mallarme, and this escape he finds in the solitary construction of a rare poetry, in an exquisite alchemy of language, and a kind of fanaticism for pure sound. In this reinvention of language, there is not only an esthetic laboratory research. There is also a deliberate attempt on Mallarme's part to ignore the common people by refusing to let himself be understood by them. Language is not and cannot remain aloof from the class struggle. One can easily follow the development of social forces from, for instance, the seventeenth century to the French Revolution, through the study in literature of stereotyped periphrases, the aim of which is to avoid the vulgar, the plebeian, in short, anything associated with the people. From the works of French linguists like Brunot, Meillet, Vendreys, and Lagrasserie, one can see that the exclusion or the inclusion of certain words in language clearly indicates replacement of one ruling class by another. Viewed from this particular angle, Mallarme's poetry is among the most reactionary. Paul Valery has very neatly expressed this attitude of the poet who isolates himself from the people and finds in his attitude immeasurable pride: "The small number," he says, "does not hate to be the small number." And one of his most penetrating remarks is that Mallarme, "the least primitive of poets, by the unusual and almost stupefying fitting together of words—by the musical eclat of the verse and its singular plenitude, gives the impression of that which is most powerful in the original poetry: the magic formula."

CONFESSION OF FAILURE

It seems to me that this is the confession of a failure, if all the resources of intelligence, the welding together of syntax and the most refined thinking, the almost desperate search for the pure poetic expression, must reach that synthesis of primitive incantation. This is a trait that links such a phenomenon to the intuitivism and the "elan vital" of a Bergson, which are expressions of the denial of reason by the disintegrating bourgeois society. It is as if the exploration of the most elaborate forms of musical art should bring us back, by means of a kind of inverted paleontology, from a fugue of Bach to the archaic theme of a primitive drum.

However, that which essentially distinguishes the position of a Mallarme from that of the poets and writers who are today the architects of irrational thinking, is that Mallarme in his time was banned and ridiculed by what one might call the "good literary society"—the academy, bourgeois critics, the intellectual pillars of capitalism—whereas today *these* welcome with open arms the proponents of irrationalism and the whirling dervishes of spiritualism.

The reason for this is that the world has reached an historical cross-roads; the forces of socialism and of capitalism are facing each other in decisive struggle. On the eve of a fundamental historical transformation, the crumbling old society finds in idealistic construction, in the submission to the metaphysical idols, in recourse to the dark forces of mysticism, the ideological weapons of counter-revolution. It is not without ground that Heidegger is a fascist philosopher and that Archibald MacLeish has become the repenting Magdalene of liberalism.

One must examine with the scientific care of an entomologist these specimens that invent moral pretexts in order to pass over, through the service entrance, to the camp of the people's enemy. Thus one discovers the pitiful petty bourgeois overwhelmed by an abject anguish, seeking refuge in the cocoon of pure poetry or of what *they* call "the freedom of the spirit," because the inexorable march of history threatens the class interests of their employers who have debased intellectual production to the level of merchandise, a grocery article.

THE POET'S LIBERTY

Above all, one has to put an end to the myth of the liberty of the poet. Far from being an *"Urmensch,"* as Valery claims, the poet is, I submit, before all a man of his time: the reflecting conscience of his period. He is not free if his thinking is not action. He is not free if he is not bound to the imperative necessity of making a choice, of making a choice between Garcia Lorca and Franco, between Nehru and Churchill, between Thaelmann and Hitler, between peace and war, between socialist democracy and imperialism.

His alleged freedom amounts to what one might call the Pontius Pilate complex, and it hides all the subterfuges of cowardliness and of renegacy.

The poet is at the same time a witness and an actor of the historical drama. He is engaged in it with full responsibility; specifically, at present, his art must be a first-line weapon at the service of the struggle of the masses.

I know that some people will feel indignant at this mission assigned to the poet. For these, the poet belongs to the transcendental sphere of the spirit, and while the fate of mankind is at stake in a formidable historical convulsion, he—the poet—can withdraw into the private property of his spiritual solitude, and continue to give to poetry the sense of a little song swinging between the traditional poles of eroticism and dream.

IDEALISTIC JUSTIFICATIONS

It is characteristic, however, that these theoreticians of art above the contingencies of class, renounce this serenity in order to knit articles in favor of British "democracy," which keeps under servitude 400,000,000 colonial slaves, or to throw anathema at the Soviet Union which has liberated a sixth of the earth from capitalist serfdom.

It is because they, too, have made their choice, but they have to disguise the shame

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of this choice by means of esthetic-idealistic justifications.

Service to mankind is a moral imperative of the human mind. In my opinion, one of the most admirable things in Lenin's work is that the author of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* that encyclopedic brain, that giant of thought, once wrote a leaflet insisting that the textile workers of Schlussberg be given boiling water for their tea. And Mayakovsky followed the true revolutionary mission of the poet, when he placed his art at the service of the fight against typhoid.

Poetry today must be a weapon as effective as a leaflet, a pamphlet, a poster. If we succeed in fusing with the class content of the poem the beauty of form, if we know how to listen to the lessons of Mayakovsky, we will be able to create a great human revolutionary poetry worthy of the cultural values we have the will to defend.

JACQUES ROUMAIN.

This article by Mr. Roumain was originally read at a recent poetry forum sponsored by the League of American Writers—The Editors.

Fraudulent History

OLIVER WISWELL, *by Kenneth Roberts. Doubleday, Doran. $3.*

"OLIVER WISWELL" does for the American Revolution what *Gone With the Wind* did for the Civil War and Reconstruction. It is an utterly corrupt book, the most blatant expression of a widespread effort to stand our history on its head in order to justify reaction today. Warner Brothers' *Santa Fe Trail* is a vilification of John Brown and the Abolitionists; Mr. Roberts' *Oliver Wiswell* is a crude and angry attack on Sam Adams and the patriots of '76. Of all such efforts now befouling the market three things may be said with charity: (1) As history, they are fraudulent, (2) As art, they are puerile, (3) As politics, they are fascist.

Like some pampered lady of the czar's retinue composing an *Escape from the Soviets,* Wiswell sputters with rage against the red rabble that has driven him out of the country he sought to betray. He is at great pains to establish the authenticity of his autobiography, and on the very first page he assures us that no historian was ever more devoted to truth. But the stiff-necked Tory doth protest too much. The more lavish his lies, the more clamorous his pretense of objectivity.

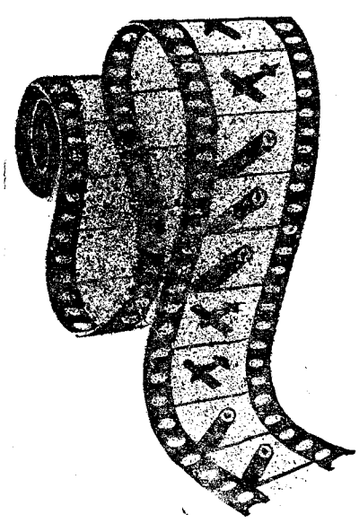
What does he wish us to believe? "All the human dregs are rising to the top," Wiswell complains. The riffraff out of the gutters, led by Adams and Hancock, are bringing death and ruin. Only the men of "position and property," loyal to the king, can restore the colonies to sanity and order. The revolutionists ("ignorant yokels") are bloodthirsty, mad, duped by demagogues. Their failure to heed the advice of their betters is a calamity which causes "unnecessary" suffering. (How much simpler life would have been without the

Gropper

Revolution. Were we a colonial dependent of Britain today we could ship arms and men without fussing about leases and mortgages.)

A colossal distortion of elementary fact and a brazen disregard of American sensibilities are required for this wishful revision of history. What was the philosophy of these Tories whose culture and urbanity and grace are contrasted with the thickheaded rascalities of the Boston "mob"? "Compressed into a sentence," wrote Parrington, "it was the expression of the will-to-power of the wealthy. Its motive was economic class interest, and its object the exploitation of society through the instrumentality of the state." As a representative of this class, Wiswell finds himself a spy against his countrymen, an agent scheming against Franklin in Paris, and a whitewasher of Benedict Arnold (this is the third Roberts novel in which Arnold is lauded for his rectitude and loyalty). Wiswell fears and hates the people. He looks forward to the day when they will finally be crushed.

That is to say, Kenneth Roberts does. For we are reminded again and again by the author that he is really talking about the crisis today, that the crisis of the eighteenth century is merely a peg for a propaganda tale. Oliver Wiswell's father gravely observes that history repeats itself, and he warns that few of us recognize the repetition till it is too late. Oliver learns that "beyond question" if all property were equally distributed, the bulk of mankind would soon be destitute. The undisguised venom of the narrator results not so much from his poring over historical records



Rodney

as from brooding over the mass movements of our own day.

Indeed, Mr. Roberts is sulking reactionary number one among living writers. His record deserves an Iron Cross. Wiswell spied and plotted against Washington's army; Roberts was a Captain of Military Intelligence in the Siberian Expeditionary Force. As European correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post* for nine years following the War, Roberts spread so many slanders against the harried populations abroad that his work was used as an argument for the passage of the Restrictive Immigration Law. In his *Why Europe Leaves Home* (1922), Kenneth Roberts anticipated the Nuremberg decrees. "Races cannot be cross-bred," he wrote, "without mongrelization any more than dogs. . . ." His campaign biography of Coolidge is as impassioned a tribute to a reactionary as Oliver Wiswell's portrait of Governor Hutchinson.

The plot of *Oliver Wiswell* is flimsy beyond words. Wiswell manages to be all over the map: in Boston, Long Island, Paris, London, South Carolina. The episodes are artificially contrived, strung out on a sodden rope. Wiswell's romance with Sally Leighton is presented through letters which always reach the lovers in the most mysterious ways, across the ocean, across battle lines. Sally is of course a member of a rebel family, but love for Oliver and understanding of his noble cause triumphs over loyalty to her family. Roberts' frenzy against the revolutionists is so uncontrolled that he cannot produce even that third-rate type of fictioneering at which he is ordinarily so adept.

It is a shame and an abomination that so many reviewers have pronounced *Oliver Wiswell* either a patriotic book of a new type (so help me: I have quotations) or a debunking effort calculated to shock the DAR. The fact is that this novel is a serious symptom of an offensive of literary reaction which parallels closely and quite logically the offensive of political and economic reaction. The fascists and the fascist-minded, as George Dimitroff pointed out five years ago, "are rummaging through the entire history of every nation" in an effort to "bamboozle the masses." Rummaging and ravaging—for the democratic traditions of the American people, recognized by Marxists as a source of inspiration, hope, and progress, are an embarrassing obstacle for reaction. *Oliver Wiswell* is an alarming portent in the literary heavens. By providing a horrible example, it should at least serve one useful purpose. It should raise the alarm, for writers and readers alike.

RUSSELL R. STONE.

Folk Music

A TREASURY OF AMERICAN SONG, *by Olin Downes and Elie Siegmeister. Howell & Soskin. $5.*

THE publication of *A Treasury of American Song* gives us the most rounded picture of the growth and importance of American folk music to date. It is a handsome book, containing some 140 songs printed in large, clear music type. Divided into sixteen his-

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torical periods, each chapter includes a preface, the songs of the period, and critical notes about the songs.

When I first began to collect folk songs [writes Mr. Siegmeister], it was with the belief, commonly held, that our country had few which would compare with other lands. But years of browsing around, collecting, performing and arranging have shown that the American folk song is one of the richest, most full blooded groups in existence. It is as native as corn on the cob, baseball or Thanksgiving turkey. Its range—from the early ballads of colonial days to the husky bawling street cries or work songs of present day America—covers the whole story of our country. The American folk song is fascinating, living music, and tells how Americans have thought, felt, and sung from the very beginning.

From this book it is clear that every stage in America's growth and struggle was recorded in song by the very people who made the events. Olin Downes in his excellent introduction states "These songs tell more of certain fundamental things than many histories or political or sociological disquisitions. The song begins where the event stopped. It is the essence of life, feeling and action."

Our contemporary dollar patriots, in their calculated misinterpretation of our basic traditions, would probably squirm with embarrassment before these eloquent songs which come out of the past to remind us of the real events and people that created them. Here is one example, a song sung by the Sons of Liberty, a group of patriots organized about 1760 for the purpose of combating the repressive acts of the British Crown.

Our worthy forefathers—let's give them a cheer
To climates unknown did courageously steer;
Through oceans, to deserts, for freedom they came
And dying bequeathed us their freedom and fame.
In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live,
Our purses are ready, steady, friends, steady.
Not as slaves but as freemen our money we'll give.

Swarms of placemen and pensioners soon will appear
Like locusts deforming the charms of the year;
Suns vainly will rise, showers vainly descend
If we are the drudge of what others shall spend.

And here's one for William Allen White's Committee composed by an early American patriot, Jezaniah Sumner, a stirring "Ode on Science."

The British yoke, the Gallic chain
Was urged upon our necks in vain,
All haughty tyrants we disdain
And shout long live America.

After the detested Alien and Sedition Laws were swept away by Jefferson, this song expressing the feelings of the people for "Jef-

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ferson and Liberty" was on every tongue:

The gloomy night before us flies,
The reign of terror now is over;
Its gags, inquisitors and spies,
Its herds of harpies are no more.
Rejoice, Columbia's sons, rejoice.
To tyrants never bend the knee,
But join with hand and soul and voice,
For Jefferson and Liberty.

The scope of this volume is so extensive that only its broadest outlines can be suggested here. Ranging from a stately hymn brought over by the Puritans to the "Ballad of Tom Joad," by Woodie Guthrie, the book embraces 300 years of American history. Some of the songs have the tang of the Appalachians and the Kentucky hills. Others come from ancient ballads. Still others have a language and a music that grows out of rural life. They tell of "Tom Bollyn," a mother-in-law's victim; a maiden's plea "I Must and Will Get Married"; the plight of the farmer "When the Farmer Comes to Town," the song of "The Shoemaker," the ballad of the great Negro hero, "John Henry." They tell of things, big and small, as seen through the eyes of the many little people. Folk songs sing of daily work, play, aspirations; they treat universal themes in a completely native manner.

Some folk "purists" erroneously believe that genuine folk music must be the product of hill folk, colorful cowboys, or Negroes "spiritualizing" on plantations. One imagines the author of such a song as someone with a long beard, unable to read or write. Mr. Siegmeister clears the atmosphere when he shows that folk song cannot be isolated from the main body of music. There has always been a living connection between art, folk, and popular music, all three being parts of the same dynamic process. Some of our best folk music was written by well trained composers (Hopkinson, Billings, Foster). Often these songs written specifically for vaudeville shows were picked up by audiences who then parodied and remodeled the original to suit their own purposes. "Oh Susanna" was sung to about 1,000 different sets of lyrics. On the other hand, the characteristics, colors, rhythms, contained in plantation or work songs form some of the basic influences in the works of trained composers. From Foster and Gottschalk to Charles Ives this interacting process is clearly proven.

Previous anthologies described folk music in idealistic terms. They speak "of a natural urge to sing," "of emotional states calling for expression." In the *Treasury* the authors make an important step forward by showing unmistakably the effects of historical changes on the character of music. For instance, during the age of slavery the early Negro plantation songs contained verses with references to freedom, but the freedom in these songs referred to heaven and had no relation with this world. With the strengthening of the Abolitionist movement the slaves no longer feared to let it be known that the freedom in their songs

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meant freedom on this earth. The Underground Railway and the Abolitionist movement became the subject of many songs. Following the Civil War and with the appearance of repressive groups such as the KKK the Negro found it necessary once more not to express his sentiments in the open. The symbolism of pre-Abolitionist spirituals replaced the jubilant civil war music.

From the days of Washington, the growth of large cities, from the era of gas lamps to electricity, to unemployment and Okies, all have contributed their quota of folk music. The needs and experiences of Mr. Average Man are to be found in great abundance in these songs. A bawdy song like "Hinky-Dinky" slipped in many an anti-war verse, verses which were actually sung in the trenches.

> They say it is a terrible war, Parley-voo
> They say it is a terrible war, Parley-voo
> They say it is a terrible war,
> But what the hell are we fighting it for.
> Hinkey Dinkey Parley Voo.

An interesting sidelight on jazz and folk music is presented by the authors. Most jazz songs, they claim, are short lived. Because they seek only surface entertainment values, they are unable to take root in deep human feelings. Folk songs, on the other hand, possess a universal character. By dealing with basic experiences a long life is assured them. Many popular songs of former years have been taken over by the people and made into folk songs.

Another great improvement over previous collections are the excellent piano arrangements provided by Mr. Siegmeister. He has set forth the decidedly logical argument that many folk songs in their native surroundings have no harmony. The physical background seems to exclude the need of any other embellishment. But when the song is pulled out of its natural environment and placed on a music page, "it is often ill at ease." Using historical and human clues arising out of the text rather than any abstract musical rules, Mr. Siegmeister has attempted to supply the color originally provided by the physical background. The tunes, however, are left entirely intact. The results are arrangements that are fresh, authoritative. Last and important, they are reasonably simple to play and sing.

Although the book contains about a hundred songs less than Carl Sandburg's collection, the selection of each period is much more representative and the result far more comprehensive.

Unquestionably the high $5 cost of the book will exclude many potential buyers, although the music scores alone are easily worth the price. There is also no good reason for the publishers to have omitted important items such as tempo marks, phrasing, etc. Another of the book's shortcomings is the omission of the music for certain verses. It is to be hoped that these errors will be corrected in future editions.

American Folk Music is straightforward and direct, devoid of any pretentiousness, self-consciousness, or neuroticism. In the final analysis, it is more than music. It is an historical saga of a continent. Across the centuries this music leaps into our times reliving for us the pain, struggle, and joys of other days, rekindling the traditions which will light the future. In the larger sense, all America wrote this exciting and colorful book. As one of its authors, you should own and sing it.

LOU COOPER.

America's Food

THE AMERICAN AND HIS FOOD: A HISTORY OF FOOD HABITS IN THE UNITED STATES, *by Richard Osborn Cummings. University of Chicago. $2.50.*

IN THE introduction to this admirable little book—which might well have been called "Hungry Americans"—I find a priceless anecdote about the Imperial Japanese Institute for Nutrition, which for nineteen years has been addling its collective brain over the physical decline of the Japanese people:

> Dr. Tadasu Saiki, director of the organization, [we are gravely informed] has conducted researches into the food value of weeds, snakes, grasshoppers, and many other items with the hope of establishing a highly nutritious but cheap diet for the Japanese people.

Just to make sure that this ingenious recipe for national health is not a product of the Oriental imperialist mind, our author, a few pages further on, gives us a picture of Horace Greeley, who, in 1837 and in New York City, "saw children burrowing in a cellar, 'a prey to famine on the one hand and cutaneous maladies on the other!' "

Mr. Cummings, a professor of history at Lawrence College, set for himself the difficult task of writing an account of the American people in terms of its food, diets, and cookery and with special emphasis on the blundering efforts of the Roosevelt administration to stave off mass hunger without imperiling the dividend appetites of the food monopolies. First there comes an account, based on a wealth of obscure and fascinating material, of the astonishing variations in eating habits from early agrarian America prior to the Revolution, through colonial times, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the epoch of industrial expansion. These chapters, with their detailed descriptions of the influence of the railroads, long distance refrigeration, the new science of bacteriology, "pure food" agitation, and dietary fads, are among the best in the book, and provide an excellent background for discussion of the modern period since World War I.

Despite the carefully "objective" tone of the study, the author manages, by a skillful and astute interpretation of the chaos of material at hand, to convey an impression of waste, mismanagement, and tragic disregard both of technical resources and human needs that must leave the intelligent reader in a state of alarm, if not downright indignation. For here, in the sober, cautious language of

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the "expert," is the real story behind the "52,000,000 shrunken bellies" in the world's most flourishing and active candidate for empire.

HAROLD WARD.

Mark Twain

MARK TWAIN IN ERUPTION, *by Mark Twain. Edited with an introduction by Bernard DeVoto. Harper & Bros. $3.75.*

WHEN Albert Bigelow Paine combed through Mark Twain's papers to publish his edition of the *Autobiography,* he omitted a great deal of material which seemed to him indiscreet and irreverent in its comment on political figures. Mr. DeVoto has gone through the material which Paine rejected, selecting certain papers which he thinks interesting or revealing, leaving others for possible future publication. What is here published is accompanied by a long introduction which offers only a very lame and implausible explanation of Mark Twain's contradictions.

Mark Twain was a curious mixture of many things. He admired the Rockefellers, yet loved the life which their monopoly capitalism was snuffing out. He hated bombast and humbug, yet sometimes was taken in by them. Twain's polemics against Theodore Roosevelt illustrate one of the contradictions. TR had a way of getting Mark's dander up, and the longer he thought about TR, the madder he became. TR was vain and demagogic; he represented the "vested interests" which were alien to Twain's agrarian democracy. This much Mark Twain perceived, and it was enough to set him off on a wild tirade. He envisaged no solution, however, except intensified monopoly practices resulting in a monarchy. For in his old age, Twain was confused and uneasy and prone to place the blame for Roosevelt on the "stupidity" and "gullibility" of the human race. These attitudes are far different from those of his earlier days, when Twain was sure of the essential goodness of the human race and its capacity for progress.

Mark Twain's feeling for the America of 1900 was, in the main, a petty bourgeois one, swinging now to praise of capitalist enterprise for its benefaction, and then to pitiless ridicule of certain capitalists for their personal foibles and shortcomings. Under Twain's expert pen, Andrew Carnegie's conceit and garrulity are held up to biting ridicule, and Carnegie becomes a laughing stock, a man with delusions of grandeur, unfortunately in a position to compel others to listen to accounts of his triumphs and gaze at the trophies of his success. The Rockefellers, on the other hand, are admired and defended by Mark Twain, who constantly excused their rapacious business practices because of their philanthropies.

On the whole, however, Twain was restless and unhappy in a milieu of hustle and bustle industrialism. He became cynical and brooding when he saw the America of his boyhood and young manhood being crushed, and the common people, whom he really liked, seemingly doing nothing about it. Twain was genuinely fond of small town folk, like those in Hannibal. He was familiar with their idiom, chuckled at their belief in the powers of hypnotism (a belief which he helped to create), and was fiercely proud of their agrarian democracy. These people were the source of his strength and furnished the basis for his lasting humor. He was a child of pre-monopoly capitalism, and the brooding conflicts that characterize some of his later writing stem from efforts to adjust himself to new and distasteful relationships, to inhuman standards and values, which monopoly capitalism created.

STEPHEN PEABODY.

Distinguished Issue

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: *A Marxian Quarterly. Fall, 1940. 30 E. 20th Street, New York City. 35 cents.*

"SCIENCE AND SOCIETY" is a powerful corrective to the current effort of pro-war intellectuals to substitute obscurantism for reason, mysticism for science. Every progressive has reason to be proud of this Marxian quarterly. In the midst of a hysteria which has swept away intellectual standards, it not only maintains but increases its high level of scholarship, sanity, and relevance to contemporary issues. *Sicence and Society* has steadily grown through the crisis, and it eminently deserves the renewed confidence and support of its readers.

The current issue includes several noteworthy contributions to our understanding of art, economics, history, and science. Oliver Larkin's article on Daumier clarifies the nature of the artist's fight on behalf of democracy from 1830-1875, a fight which assumes special interest in the light of recent French history. Sanford W. Palmer's article on "Agriculture and the Labor Reserve" is a keen Marxist analysis of the background of migratory workers like the Joads. "Robespierre and the Problem of War" continues the series of illuminating and pertinent studies by Samuel Bernstein on the tradition of the French Revolution. Margaret Schlauch's essay on "The Revolt of 1381 in England" brings to light new and exciting facts about a revolutionary episode in English history which has immortalized the names of John Ball and Wat Tyler. J. B. S. Haldane's communication on "Lysenko and Genetics" is a provocative comment on the discussion of genetic studies in the Soviet Union which was featured in the last issue of *Science and Society.*

Marking the end of Volume IV, this distinguished issue combines careful research with versatility of interest. At a time of profound historical transformation, the editors have done well to emphasize epochs of great upheaval, an understanding of which is indispensable for coping with contemporary problems.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Season Opens

"My Sister Eileen" and "Meet the People" lift Broadway out of the doldrums. The wit of one and the social pungency of the other illumine an otherwise dreary beginning.

THE play Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov have written around Ruth McKenney's stories included in *My Sister Eileen,* is a genial and frequently quite amusing comedy, and will afford you a pleasant evening in the theater. George S. Kaufman, who directed it, may also be listed as a collaborator, for he is said to have had a hand in rewriting the play. In so doing, he has supplied a goodly number of the quirks and fancies for which he is famous on Broadway, and they are in excellent taste and represent good timing. There are other scenes that lag (notably in the first act), but the production in its entirety catches and reproduces much of the ebullient spirit Ruth got into her notably light-hearted series about the girls who came from Columbus, Ohio, to live in the big city.

A host of well (and evil) intentioned characters romp through the famous Greenwich Village basement apartment, kids run sticks along the iron bars that guard the window, drunks peer in and shout at the girls, Cossacks deliver drunken ex-tenants, the Greek landlord holds forth on art, the male member of the unmarried couple upstairs moves in on the girls for a time, policemen regard them with a leery eye, and the excellent second-act curtain makes brilliant use of the most hilarious episode of them all—when the Brazilian navy follows Ruth home, en masse. This scene in particular is notable for its understanding of what Ruth put down on paper, and we may give credit for it to the authors, to Mr. Kaufman, and to Shirley Booth, who plays the acidulous elder sister with brilliant satirical intent and incisive understatement in her acting. And of course, to Ruth McKenney, who supplied the material.

There is a generous number of pleasant players in the cast. In the name role, Jo Ann Sayers is pretty, if somewhat stiff and constrained. The Mr. Spitzer of the book has become the Mr. Appopolous of Morris Carnovsky, a joy to behold. He is the artistic Greek landlord, and his playing as always, reveals an acting intelligence which is in the finest tradition of the stage. There is a neat contribution by George Cotton, who plays a low-grade moron with such telling effect that when he lumbers across the stage, and Ruth says, "Of mice and men," you have the second biggest laugh of a very funny evening. Gordon Jones, as the alcoholic ex-football player living upstairs in sin, Richard Quine as a puling drug-clerk who makes an improper proposal with the innocence of a babe, and the six future admirals, the Messrs. Ames, Brixey, Knego, Marion, Roberts, and Seymour, help ably to embody the hare-brained humor of which Ruth McKenney is our modern master.

ALVAH BESSIE.

"Meet the People"

The Hollywood Theater Alliance's revue is timely and sparkling.

ONE year to a day from the time they opened in Hollywood, the musical revue, *Meet the People,* met the people at the Mansfield. Run, do not walk, to the nearest entrance; for now that the Hollywood Theatre Alliance has opened its first production here, we have a theater season.

Coming events, they say, have a way of casting their shadows before them. If the new revue got a little too much of a build-up before its arrival, you will not be too disappointed, I assure you. The stage is full of lovely and charming people who can do almost anything you would like to see done. All of them had apparently been hanging around on the Gold Coast without any work, and the Alliance is to be congratulated on picking them off Hollywood and Vine and giving them a chance to express themselves. They are young, full of hops, and having a hell of a lot of fun. What is more they are thoroughly professional, their material is fresh—if not always brilliant—and their collective efforts provide a first-rate entertainment.

The show is progressive from first to last. Emphasis on the union-label, anti-war, anti-stuffed-shirt, anti-reactionary, pro-labor and pro-peace. Witness the opening number, *The Legend of the Sleeping Beauty.* The Sleeping Beauty is Hollywood. After she is awakened, the entire cast rushes off the stage into the audience to shake your hand, literally. Back on the stage a group of fourteen boys and fourteen girls proceeds to get down to work to make you happy. There are lyrics by Henry Myers, Edward Eliscu, and music by Jay Gorney and others, including Offenbach, Verdi, and whoosiz. Our own Jack Gilford from Cafe Society manipulates his plastic face beautifully. An impossible-looking young man impossibly named Doodles Weaver is indescribable. You'll love him. There is a beautiful young lady named Marion Colby, whose art will mean the death of all dead-pan night-club singers. There is another one named Nanette Fabares, who can burlesque the coloratura sopranos to a fare-thee-well. There is a stately dame appropriately named Elizabeth Talbot-Martin who can be Garbo, Mrs. FDR, Miss Hepburn, and others, to the life. I'll match Jack Williams against any tap-dancer you can produce. Learn the truth about the Same Old South. About the Bill of Rights. See how movies are made, a la Milt Gross—banker tosses money-bag to producer; producer high-pressures writer, writer slaps typewriter, typewriter disgorges can of film, director hands can of film to theater-owner, who opens it, revealing a dead fish. The patron is then slapped in the face with same. QED.

Whether you want hot dancing (Josephine Del Mar), Jitterbugging (Dorothy Roberts and Ted Arkin), socially-pointed satire (sketches by Ben and Sol Barzman), or what have you, *Meet the People* has got it. It is a distinct pleasure to have a musical on hand that is young, fresh, unaffected, not brassy, not cheap, not vulgar, and pointed up our alley. Please *Meet the People;* as the lyric has it, "They're wonderful."

A. B.

"Professor" Jack Gilford and two of his students, Patty Brilhante and Virginia Bryan, discuss a weighty philosophical problem in "Meet the People," currently playing at the Mansfield Theater.

DRAMA À CLEF

The new play by Edward Chodorov and H. S. Kraft—*Cue for Passion*—was a pleasant evening in the theater. What they offered was interesting, at times significant, even if generally disappointing. The disappointment arose from the fact that a clever first act, which dealt incisively and passionately with a vital human situation—the mutual hatred of a famous novelist and his celebrated journalistic wife, and the husband's self-torment over his progressive disintegration as a person—was turned, in the second and third acts, into a passable murder melodrama and no more.

The famous novelist who, as John Michael Elliott had been a celebrity in his own right, smarts under the sense that he is now known as Mr. Frances Chapman. He has become an alcoholic, a lecher with a taste for young girls,

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and he is about to make a fool of himself by appearing as an actor on a stage. The domineering journalistic wife with her various consorts—a fascist general, an invisible senator, a playwright—overshadows the man, and when at the end of the first act he is found shot to death, she takes the situation in hand.

It was obviously the intention of the authors to make a mordant and corrosive comment upon the relative immunity from scandal of the well-to-do and influential of our land and the fascist mentality of many people who consider themselves spokesmen for "democracy." Frances Ames almost succeeds in traducing the aims of even-handed justice by quashing all inquiry into the identity of John Michael Elliott's murderer. She and her various friends are too important to be smirched by so sordid an affair. She does not succeed. So the second and third acts are devoted to her efforts to conceal the facts of the case, the centering of the audience's suspicion upon her two visible paramours; upon the stage-director; his assistant; the novelist's current mistress; a young girl; the girl's fiance; the producer and, of course, Frances Chapman. This is routine murder mystery, and not terribly compelling.

Otto L. Preminger's direction of the mystery was lax, but there were a few excellent performances. You will regret the early demise of George Coulouris, who played the novelist. Someone should give Mr. Coulouris a chance to do some acting. He is one of our most greatly endowed performers—brilliant, intelligent, with a great flare for the projection of valid emotion. Gale Sondergaard, as the lady journalist, has stage presence and command of her material. There was a very gratifying minor character played by Oscar Karlweis, who should be watched by all students of the actor's art; and Claire Niesen, who made her Broadway debut, was fresh, charming, and very sympathetic.

GOOD NEWS FROM CHICAGO

There's a new spirit abroad in Chicago. Progressives are jubilant over the success of a growing baby in the theater field: the five-year-old Chicago Repertory group. Currently running is a musical revue called *Not On My Life,* which, in case you haven't guessed it already, plugs the peace theme of the day. This job is the work of Dick Unell and Bill Jefferson, and features two hit songs: *Johnny Wants a Job Not a Gun,* and *Don't Veto Vito,* the finale. Marcantonio himself saw the show last month, and demonstrated characteristic enthusiasm. The bill is running through January.

A theater school has emerged from this lively group. Staff: Arun Foxman of New York, new director of the Chicago Rep, with an attendant staff including John Pratt, who costumed the *Swing Mikado,* Louis Widmeyer, three-time national fencing champion, Denis Martin for voice and diction, Richard Martin for sets, lighting, and camera. Foxman is currently in New York lining up sponsors for the school, the theater, and its first major production, *Thomas Jefferson,* by Jack Bentkover, Rep Group playwright, Shaw's *Heartbreak House,* appropriate to the times for its anti-war theme, is tentatively scheduled to follow *Jefferson,* which opens at Forrester's Theater with the support of the IWO, the Lewiston Defense Committee, AFL unions, the local CIO council, and a host of university students.

A. B.

"The Thief of Bagdad"

A review of several movies including "The Bank Dick."

"THE THIEF OF BAGDAD," which put a lot of Alexander Korda's money into circulation, will not gross enough at the box office to pay for the celluloid it is printed on. Alexander Korda is fond of the children's game known as Living Statues, and since Henry VIII made his reputation he has not had a movie in which the characters weren't made of cast iron. In the industry they call it the Korda touch. Apply the Korda touch to a prince and princess dressed in rich and splendid costumes, moving in technicolor through costly costumes, speaking gently to each other about affairs of the heart, and you will be pretty sure to have a boring picture like *The Thief of Bagdad.*

Alexander Korda has never proceeded beyond a point reached by the American movies fifteen years ago, when the only thing producers thought they had to do for a successful epic was to spend enough money for sets and extras. The movies are more subtle now, and some taste and intelligence are needed even in the expenditure of $2,000,000. Korda showed bad judgment to start with by spending $2,000,000 on a remake of a picture which more people remember than he thinks. *The Thief of Bagdad* was not one of Douglas Fairbanks' best roles, but he played it with all his grace, wit, and self-assurance. In 1924 he was in the midst of the series of costume pictures for which he became famous, though at the time he was known as a comedian. *The Thief of Bagdad* was an imitation of the German spectacles of the nineteen-twenties, when the most sumptuous and extravagant sets in the history of the movies were built. But to Fairbanks even a set worth a million dollars was only something to clamber over. He used this mythical Bagdad, where even the streets took a high polish, for gags; he would steal the rope from a magician performing the rope trick and escape over the backs of a couple of hundred extras on their knees praying; he would hide in empty wine jugs and, when things became desperate, scramble up the magic rope and pull it after him. The picture became too splendid when he left Bagdad to go to the top of the world and the bottom of the sea in search of something or other to win the hand of the princess, and the sets were too much for him. There was a big battle scene when he came back to Bagdad. The evil prince had introduced a fifth column of his followers into the city, and at a signal they threw off their disguises and seized the palace. Douglas Fairbanks, on a white horse, galloped round the walls with a little box of magic powder, and every time he threw a pinch of powder behind him a troop of cavalry sprang up until Bagdad was surrounded by galloping men. It was a wonderful picture, and the fact that I was ten years old at the time doesn't have a damned thing to do with it.

Douglas Fairbanks died an expatriate snob with a British accent you could cut with a butter knife and good connections at Cliveden. His early pictures were jingoistic and his philosophy was never more profound than to urge the public to exercise if it wanted to succeed. The efforts of his ghost writers made him the Dale Carnegie of the nineteen-twenties. The fact remains, however, that he was a great movie personality, and for everyone who grew up after the last war he is part of American folk lore. For Darryl Zanuck to make *Mark of Zorro* with Tyrone Power instead of Fairbanks, for Alexander Korda to make *The Thief of Bagdad* starring Sabu, is like making cannon out of butter, two things which are not really similar. The 1940 *Mark of Zorro* is a mild adventure film, but the 1940 *Thief of Bagdad* is not even that. It involves the insipid love affair of a prince and princess who are colorless despite technicolor, and even the mechanical marvels which are stressed in the advertising are unconvincing. When the genie is flying round the world with Sabu on the back of his neck, all Korda does is suspend a dummy of Rex Ingram in front of a process screen showing shots of the Grand Canyon. My judgment of *The Thief of Bagdad* is confirmed by a friend of mine aged ten.

The Bank Dick is the funniest picture W. C. Fields has made in years because it is not cluttered up with Mae West or incip-

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ient glamour girls who have to be provided with love scenes in which Fields does not figure. The theory behind it is that if you dislike W. C. Fields you will not dislike him less for the presence of a pair of lovesick featured players, whereas if you like him, you will want him to be on the screen all the time, as he is in *The Bank Dick*. The application of this theory is to me a complete success. The budget of *The Bank Dick* was small enough so no Universal executive butted in to make sure that it would make money. And Fields is able to linger over his gags and deliver his lines majestically out of the side of his mouth without being rushed. Even when he is being pursued by police at 100 miles an hour, he is not in a hurry.

The Bank Dick does not include any of the routines Fields worked out in his years on the stage, which made his first talking pictures notable. He does not juggle or play golf or billiards. Four or five years ago, when he had exhausted these accomplishments, his movie career came to a temporary standstill, for nobody bothered to supply him with fresh material until he did it himself. His best scenes as Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield,* one of his pictures which was most cluttered up with other actors, were left behind in the cutting room. Neither Charles Dickens nor any Hollywood screen writer had a hand in writing *The Bank Dick*. Fields did it all. There is not much of a plot; Fields threatens small children, sneaks off to the Black Pussy saloon and, in the end, after a fine old-style chase, his drunkenness and indolence are handsomely rewarded. I can't think of any better way of spending 69 minutes of your time than at *The Bank Dick*. There is one stupid, brief joke involving a Negro which nobody laughed at. It marred an otherwise screamingly funny picture.

Power and the Land is a three-reel documentary film celebrating the Rural Electrification Administration. It was directed by Joris Ivens, who made *The Spanish Earth* and *The 400,000,000,* and it is good to see. It opens just before dawn on an August day on a Southern Ohio farm. The farmer and his sons milk the cows by the light of a lantern. The sun comes up, and there is a shot of two white plowhorses in a misty pasture which reminds you that America's best photographers are now working for the United States. The farmer spends the day cutting corn, his sons pitch hay, his wife does the washing. The hard, backbreaking work of a farm is not finished till long after dark, when the farmer has sharpened his tools for the next day and his wife has done the dishes. Life on a farm would be easier with electricity, but, as the commentator rightly points out, most farms do not have electricity because power companies can make more money staying in the cities. What the commentator does not say is that electrification of the countryside could have been accomplished by private companies at a profit if they had wanted to, but being in the hands of bankers, private utilities had electrified only 10 percent

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or so of the farms before the REA.

The farmer in *Power and the Land* forms a power cooperative with his neighbors and gets an REA loan. Presumably the utility company in Southern Ohio is not disposed to be troublesome, for the REA lines go up as easy as pie, without being enjoined once by the utilities, and the farm gets electricity to milk the cows, cool the milk, run the pump, the grindstone, the washing machine, the iron, the range, the radio, and all the gadgets which mean the difference between 1841 and 1941. The farmer comes in for supper, snaps on the electric light, and hangs his hat on the chimney of the old kerosene lamp.

Power and the Land was begun by Pare Lorentz and Joris Ivens finished it early last summer. It was not released then because people in the REA were afraid that newspapers would denounce it as propaganda, which it is. As propaganda, it does not tell the full story of REA. This government agency has definite accomplishments to its credit, and when its appropriation was wiped out of the 1938 budget by the poll-tax statesmen of the House economy bloc, progressives in Congress were right in strongly protesting. Now, however, REA is forgotten, and even if *Power and the Land* had been released before election it is possible that no one would have noticed it. Unlike TVA the REA has no military significance, and therefore, Washington has no interest in increasing efficiency on the farm or making life easier for farmers. The word has gone out to farmers that they, too, have grown soft and have to sacrifice, and one of the things they are going to have to sacrifice is rural electrification.

Power and the Land presents the REA as something almost as superhuman as Sabu's magic carpet. The farmers get power by inviting their county agent to give them a lecture, and there is no intimation that electricity costs money. Farmers owning 300 acres are not likely to be millionaires unless there is oil on their land. Electricity raises the yield from a farm, and where a REA cooperative has a chance to buy government power, it pays for itself many times over. The extra leisure enjoyed by a family on an electrified farm is an undeclared dividend.

As a film *Power and the Land* is not as good as the other work of either Ivens or Lorentz. It is beautifully photographed, and should cause Hollywood to note that there is nothing like actual sun for outdoor scenes. For some reason it is generally felt that documentary films should be accompanied by a poetic commentary in which everything is repeated a few times with a kind of drawing-room folksiness. In the case of *Power and the Land* the commentary was written by Stephen Vincent Benét. At one point, to the consternation of the audience, the commentator breaks into a short chant. Documentary photographers have realistically recorded the actual expressions on people's faces, and the next step in the development of documentaries will be to permit the sound track to pick up what people actually say.

DANIEL TODD.

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